This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

B 452018

Anderson

Baptist Union Theological Seminary

LIBRARY.

Library No. 3689 Shelf No. 146

Presented by Rev H G. Weston Dr

Chicago, 187 2

Westcott
BX
8915
.B75

THE

WHOLE WORKS

OF THE

LATE REVEREND THOMAS BOSTON
OF ETTRICK;

NOW FIRST COLLECTED, AND REPRINTED WITHOUT ABRIDGMENT;

INCLUDING

HIS MEMOIRS, WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

EDITED BY THE

REV. SAMUEL M'MILLAN.

VOL. V.

ABERDEEN:
GEORGE AND ROBERT KING, ST. NICHOLAS STREET.
M.DCCC.XLIX.

K

A SOLILOQUY

ON THE

ART OF MAN-FISHING;

WITH

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERS

OF

TRUE BELIEVERS;

AND

VIEW OF THIS AND THE OTHER WORLD;

TOGETHER WITH

SUNDRY IMPORTANT SERMONS.

BY THE

REV. THOMAS BOSTON,

OF ETTRICK.

ABERDEEN:
GEORGE AND ROBERT KING, 28, ST. NICHOLAS STREET.

1849.

555.

CONTENTS OF VOL. V.

PAGE.

A SOLILOQUY ON THE ART OF MAN-FISHING, ... 5

THE DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERS OF TRUE BELIEVERS.

I. IN RELATION TO GOD IN CHRIST, AS THEIR REFUGE AND PORTION.

PSAL. cxlii. 5.—I cried unto thee, O Lord, I said, Thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living, ... 44

FAITH'S RECOGNITION OF TAKING GOD FOR A REFUGE AND PORTION ILLUSTRATED.

PSAL. cxlii. 5.—I cried unto thee, O Lord, I said, Thou art my refuge, and my portion, in the land of the living, ... 55

GOD IN CHRIST THE BELIEVER'S PORTION.

PSAL. cxlii. 5.—I cried unto thee, O Lord, I said, Thou art my refuge, and my portion in the land of the living, ... 68

II. IN RELATION TO THEIR DISPOSITION AND PRACTICE AS CITIZENS OF ZION.

THE CITIZEN OF ZION DESCRIBED.

PSAL. xv. 1.—Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill? 92

THE CITIZEN OF ZION AN UPRIGHT WALKER.

PSAL. xv. 2.—He that walketh uprightly, ... 101

144056

PAGE.

THE CITIZEN OF ZION A WORKER OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.

PSAL. xv. 2.—And worketh righteousness, ... 110

THE CITIZEN OF ZION A SPEAKER OF TRUTH IN HIS HEART.

PSAL. xv. 2.—And speaketh the truth in his heart, ... 120

III. IN RELATION TO THEIR SPEECH, AND REVERENCE OF GOD'S NAME.

A CAVEAT AGAINST PROFANE SWEARING, AND A PERSUASIVE TO PLAIN SPEAKING, WITHOUT UNHALLOWED ADDITIONS.

JAMES v. 12.—But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea, be yea, and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation. 132

IV. IN RELATION TO THEIR MEEKNESS, AS AN EVIDENCE OF GREAT UNDERSTANDING, AND THE FOLLY OF PASSIONATENESS.

PROV. xiv. 29.—He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding: but he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly, ... 150

V. IN RELATION TO THEIR FORGIVING INJURIES, IN OPPOSITION TO REVENGE.

Rom. xii. 19 —Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord, 171

VI. IN RELATION TO LOVING THEIR ENEMIES.

A PERSUASIVE TO LOVE OUR ENEMIES.

MATTH. v. 44, 45.—Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you: that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven, for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust, ... 181

VII. IN RELATION TO THEIR CARRIAGE IN A TIME OF ABOUNDING SIN, AND THEIR SAFETY IN A SUFFERING TIME.

THE CHARACTER OF ZION'S MOURNERS.

EZEK. ix. 4.—And the Lord said unto him, Go through the midst of the city,

PAGE.

through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh, and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof, ... 201

ADVICE TO ZION'S MOURNERS.

EZEK. ix. 4.—And the Lord said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh, and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof, ... 210

VIII. IN RELATION TO THEIR FRIENDSHIP TO CHRIST, AND EVIDENCING IT, BY DOING WHATSOEVER HE COMMANDS THEM.

BELIEVERS THE FRIENDS OF CHRIST.

JOHN xv. 14.—Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you, ... 221

IX. IN RELATION TO THEIR WORK IN THIS LIFE, AND THEIR JOURNEY TO THE OTHER WORLD.

THE NATURE AND NECESSITY OF THE CHRISTIAN'S WORK.

ECCL. ix. 10.—Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest, ... 248

X. IN RELATION TO THE HAPPY EFFECT OF CHRIST'S GOOD-WILL IN THE WORD OF GRACE.

LUKE xix. 5.—Zaccheus, make haste, and come down: for to-day I must abide at thy house, ... 272

XI. IN RELATION TO THEIR ENTERING INTO REST IN CHRIST.

HEB. iv. 3.—For we which have believed do enter into rest, ... 281

THE STATE AND CHARACTER OF BELIEVERS.

1 JOHN v. 19.—And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness, ... 301

PAGE.

THE DIVINE CALL TO SINNERS TO COME OUT FROM AMONG THE WORLD LYING IN WICKEDNESS, EXPLAINED AND URGED.

1 JOHN v. 19.—The world lieth in wickedness.

2 COR. vi. 17.—Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, ... 349

THE BELIEVER'S HUNDREDFOLD IN THIS LIFE CONSIDERED; AND A VIEW OF THE REALITY, PARTS, INHABITANTS, PASSAGE INTO, AND STATE OF MEN IN THE WORLD TO COME.

MARK x. 30.—He shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come, eternal life, ... 374

THE GREAT CARE AND CONCERN NOW, THAT OUR SOULS BE NOT GATHERED WITH SINNERS IN THE OTHER WORLD, CONSIDERED AND IMPROVED.

PSAL. xxvi. 19.—Gather not my soul with sinners. 443

THE IMPROVEMENT OF LIFE IN THIS WORLD TO THE RAISING A GOOD NAME, THE BEST BALANCE FOR THE PRESENT, FOR THE VANITY AND MISERY OF HUMAN LIFE: AND THE GOOD MAN'S DYING-DAY BETTER THAN HIS BIRTH-DAY.

ECCL. vii. 1 —A good name is better than precious ointment; and the day of death, than the day of one's birth, ... 461

CHRIST'S SPECIAL ORDER FOR GATHERING HIS SAINTS TO HIM AT THE LAST DAY; WITH THEIR DISTINGUISHING CHARACTER, AS ENTERING INTO HIS COVENANT NOW, CONSIDERED.

PSAL 1. 5.—Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice. 501

THE SAINTS' LIFETIME IN THIS WORLD A NIGHT-TIME; THEIR EXPECTATION OF THE DAY'S BREAKING IN THE OTHER WORLD, AND THE SHADOWS FLEEING AWAY; AND THEIR GREAT CONCERN FOR CHRIST'S PRESENCE TILL THAT HAPPY SEASON COME.

SONG ii. 17.—Until the day break, and the shadows flee away; turn, my Beloved, and be thou like a roe, or a young hart on the mountains of Bether, ... 525

PAGE.

READINESS FOR OUR REMOVAL INTO THE OTHER WORLD OPENED UP, URGED AND ENFORCED.

LUKE xii. 40.—Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not, ... 556

THE PECULIAR ADVANTAGE AND BUSINESS OF LIFE OPENED UP, AND APPLIED.

ISA. xxxviii. 19.—The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day: the father to the children shall make known thy truth, ... 586

A SOLILOQUY

ON THE

ART OF MAN-FISHING.

Written in 1699.

[*For a pattern to every preacher of the Gospel.*]

Ah! Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? This day seems to be a day of darkness and gloominess; the glory is departed even to the threshold of the temple. We may call ordinances *Ichabod;* and name the faithful preachers of Scotland no more *Naomi*, but *Marah*, for the Lord deals bitterly with them, in so much forsaking his ordinances as at this day. The Lord hath forsaken them in a great measure, as to success attending their labours. They toil all the night; but little or nothing is caught: few or none can they find to come into the net. So that Jeremiah's exercise may be theirs, chap. xiii. 17. "If ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride; and mine eye shall weep sore, and run down with tears."

And thou, O my soul, mayst make this thy exercise, if thou hadst a heart that could mourn either for thyself or others. Though indeed it is no great wonder that God does not countenance with much success the like of me, who (if I may or dare class myself among those that are faithful) am the meanest, the most unworthy of them all, not worthy to take his covenant in my mouth, who am a child in piety and the mystery of godliness, though not in years; who am a poor fool, having a weak heart and a shallow head; who might rather be learning of others than teaching them; who can but wade about the outer parts of that depth, into which others can enter far; who have so little love to Christ, and so little pure zeal for his glory; can say so little for the truth, and so little against error; who am altogether unworthy and insufficient for these things: no wonder, I say, God does not countenance me, when others, that are as tall cedars in the Lord's vineyard, do so little good, even

others that are great men in the church for piety and learning. But yet seeing I am called out to preach this everlasting gospel, it is my duty to endeavour, and it is my desire to be (Lord, thou knowest) a fisher of men. But, alas! I may come in with my complaints to my Lord, that I have toiled in some measure, but caught nothing, for any thing I know, as to the conversion of any one soul. I fear I may say, I have almost spent my strength in vain, and my labour for nought, for Israel is not gathered. O my soul, what may be the cause of this, why does my preaching so little good? No doubt part of the blame lies on myself, and a great part of it too. But who can give help in this case but the Lord himself? and how can I expect it from him but by prayer, and faith in the promises, and by consulting his word, where I may, by his Spirit shining on my heart, (shine, O Sun of righteousness), learn how to carry, and what to do, to the end the gospel preached by me may not be unsuccessful? Therefore did my heart cry out after Christ this day, and my soul was moved, when I read that sweet promise of Christ, Matth. iv. 19. *Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men*, directed to those that would follow him. O how fain would my soul follow him, as on other accounts, so on this, that I might be honoured to be a fisher of men; Therefore my soul would fain know what sort of following Christ this is, to which this sweet promise is annexed. I would know it, (Lord, thou knowest), that I might do it, and so catch poor souls by the gospel, and that I might know whether I have a right to this promise or not. O let thy light and thy truth shine forth, that they may be guides to me in this matter; and let the meditations of my heart be according to thy mind, and directed by thy unerring Spirit. Grant light and life, O Lord my God!

Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.

In these words there are two things to be considered.

1. There is a duty, *Follow me.* Wherein consider, (1.) The object, *me*, even the Lord Jesus Christ, the chief fisher of men, who was sent by the Father to gather in the lost sheep of the house of Israel, who was and is the infinitely-wise God, and so knew the best way to catch men, and can instruct men how to be fishers of others. (2.) The act, *Follow* (Gr. *come after) me:* Leave your employment, and come after me. Though no doubt there is a direction here to all the ministers of the gospel, that have left their other employments, and betaken themselves to the preaching of the word, *viz.* that if they would do good to souls, and gain them by their ministry, then they are to imitate Christ, in their carriage and preaching to make him their pattern, to write after his copy, as a fit mean for gaining of souls.

2. There is a promise annexed to the duty. Wherein we may consider, (1.) The benefit promised; that is, to be *made fishers of men;* which I take to be not only an investing of them with authority, and a calling of them to the office, but also a promise of the success they should have, that fishing of men should be their employment, and they should not be employed in vain, but following Christ, they should indeed catch men by the gospel. (2.) The fountain-cause of this, *I, I will make you;* none other can make you fishers of men but me.

Thou mayest observe, 1. Then, O my soul, *that it is the Lord Jesus Christ that makes men fishers of men.*

Here I shall shew,

I. How Christ makes men fishers of men.

II. Why unconverted men are compared to fish in the water.

III. That ministers are fishers by office.

I. How does Christ make men fishers of men?

In answer to this question, consider spiritual fishing two ways. 1. As to the office and work itself: and, 2. As to the success of it.

First, He makes them fishers as to their office, by his call, which is twofold, outward and inward, by setting them apart to the office of the ministry; and it is thy business, O my soul, to know whether thou hast it or not. But of this more afterwards.

Secondly, He makes them fishers as to success; that is, he makes them catch men to himself by the power of his Spirit accompanying the word they preach, and the discipline they administer, 1 Cor. i. 18. "The preaching of the cross—unto us which are saved, is the power of God. 1 Thess. i. 5. "Our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance." He it is that brings sinners into the net which ministers spread; and if he be not with them to drive the fish into the net, they may toil all the night and day too, and catch nothing.

1. O my soul, then see that gifts will not do the business. A man may preach as an angel, and yet be useless. If Christ withdraw his presence, all will be to no purpose. If the Master of the house be away, the household will loath their food, though it be dropping down about their tent-doors.

2. Why shouldst thou then on the one hand, as sometimes thou art, be lifted up when thou preachest a good and solid discourse, wherein gifts do appear, and thou gettest the applause of men? Why, thou mayst do all this, and yet be no fisher of men. The fish may see the bait, and play about it as pleasant, but this is not enough to catch them. On the other hand, why shouldst thou be so much discouraged, (as many times is the case), because thy gifts are

so small, and thou art but as a child in comparison of others? Why, if Christ will, he can make thee a fisher of men, as well as the most learned rabbi in the church, Psal. viii. 2. *Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength.* Yea, hast thou not observed how God owned a man very weak in gifts, [Mr. J. E.] and made him more successful than others that were far beyond him in parts? Has not God put this treasure in earthen vessels, that the power might be seen to be of him? Lift up thyself then, O my soul, Christ can make thee a fisher of men, however weak thou art. Follow thou him. My soul desires to follow hard after thee, O God!

3. Be concerned then, in the first place, O my soul, for the presence of God in ordinances, and for his power that will make a change among people, Psal. cx. 3. When thy discourse, though ever so elaborate, shall be but as a lovely song, O set thyself most for this. When thou studiest, send up ejaculations to thy Lord for it. When thou writest a sermon, or dost ruminate on it, then say to God, Lord, this will be altogether weak without thy power accompanying it. O, power and life from God in ordinances is sweet. Seek it for thyself, and seek it for thy hearers. Acknowledge thine own weakness and uselessness without it, and so cry incessantly for it, that the Lord may drive the fish into the net, when thou art spreading it out. Have an eye to this power, when thou art preaching; and think not thou to convert men by the force of reason: If thou do, thou wilt be beguiled.

4. What an honourable thing is it to be fishers of men! How great an honour shouldst thou esteem it, to be a catcher of souls! *We are workers together with God*, says the apostle. If God has ever so honoured thee, O that thou knewest it, that thou mightst bless his holy name, that ever made such a poor fool as thee to be a co-worker with him. God has owned thee to do good to those who were before caught. O my soul, bless thou the Lord. Lord, what am I, or what is my father's house, that thou hast brought me to this?

5. Then seest thou not here what is the reason thou toilest so long, and catchest nothing? The power comes not along. Men are like Samuel, who, when God was calling him, thought it had been Eli. So when thou speakest many times, they do not discern God's voice, but thine; and therefore the word goes out as it comes in.

6. Then, O my soul, despair not of the conversion of any, be they ever so profligate. For it is the power of the Spirit that drives any person into the net; and this cannot be resisted. Mockers of religion, yea, blasphemers may be brought into the net; and many

times the wind of God's Spirit in the word lays the tall cedars in sin down upon the ground, when they that seem to be as low shrubs in respect of them, stand fast upon their root. Publicans and harlots shall enter the kingdom of heaven before self-righteous Pharisees.

7. What thinkest thou, O my soul, of that doctrine that lays aside this power of the Spirit, and makes moral suasion all that is requisite to the fishing of men? That doctrine is hateful to thee. My soul loaths it, as attributing too much to the preacher, and too much to corrupt nature, in taking away its natural impotency to good, and as against the work of God's Spirit, contrary to experience; and is to me a sign of the rottenness of the heart that embraces it. Alas! that it should be owned by any among us, where so much of the Spirit's power has been felt.

II. But why are unconverted men compared to fish in the water? Among other reasons, they are so,

1. Because as the water is the natural element of fish, so sin is the proper and natural element for an unconverted soul. Take the fish out of the water, it cannot live; and take from a natural man his idols, he is ready to say with Micah, *Ye have taken away my gods, and what have I more?* The young man in the gospel could not be persuaded to seek after treasure in heaven, and lay by the world. It is in sin that the only delight of natural men is; but in holiness they have no more delight than a fish upon the earth, or a sow in a palace. Oh the woful case of a natural man! Bless the Lord, O my soul, that when that was thy element as well as that of others, yet Christ took thee in his net, held thee, and would not let thee go, and put another principle in thee, so that now it is heavy for thee to wade, far more to swim in these waters.

2. The fish in a sunny day are seen to play themselves in the water. So the unregenerate, whatever grief they may seem to have upon their spirits, when a storm arises either without, by outward troubles, or within by conscience gnawing convictions, yet when these are over, and they are in a prosperous state, they play themselves in the way of sin, and take their pleasure in it, not considering what it may cost them at the last. Oh! how does prosperity in the world ruin many a soul! The prosperity of fools shall destroy them. And O how destructive would prosperity have been to thee, O my soul, if God had given it to thee many times when thou wouldst have had it! Bless the Lord, that ever he was pleased to cross thee in a sinful course.

3. As the fish greedily look after and snatch at the bait, not minding the hook; even so natural men drink in sin greedily, as the ox drinketh in the water. They look on sin as a sweet morsel;

and it is to them sweet in the mouth, though bitter in the belly They play with it, as the fish with the bait: but, Oh! alas, when they take the serpent in their bosom, they mind not the sting, Prov. ix. 17, 18. The devil knows well how to dress his hooks; but, alas! men know not by nature how to discern them. Pity then, O my soul, the wicked of the world, whom thou seest greedily satisfying their lusts. Alas! they are poor blinded souls; they see the bait, but not the hook; and therefore it is that they are even seen as it were dancing about the mouth of the pit; therefore rush they on to sin as a horse to the battle, not knowing the hazard. O pity the poor drunkard, the swearer, the unclean person, &c. that is wallowing in his sin. Bless thou the Lord also, O my soul, that when thou wast playing with the bait, and as little minding the hook as others, God opened thine eyes, and let thee see thy madness and danger, that thou mightst flee from it. And O be now careful that thou snatch at none of the devil's baits, lest he catch thee with his hook: for though thou mayst be restored again by grace, yet it shall not be without a wound; as the fish sometimes slip the hook, but go away wounded; which wound may be sad to thee, and long a-healing. And this thou hast experienced.

4. As fish in the water love deep places and wells, and are most frequently found there; so wicked men have a great love to carnal security, and have no will to strive against the stream. Fish love deep places best, where there is least noise. O how careful are natural men to keep all quiet, that there may be nothing to disturb them in their rest in sin! they love to be secure, which is their destruction. O my soul, beware of carnal security, of being secure, though plunged over head and ears in sin.

5. As fish are altogether unprofitable as long as they are in the water, so are wicked men in their natural estate, they can do nothing that is really good: they are unprofitable to themselves, and unprofitable to others: what good they do to others, is more *per accidens* than *per se*, Rom. iii. 12. How far must they then be mistaken, who think the wicked of the world the most useful in the place where they live! They may indeed be useful for carrying on designs for Satan's interest, or their own vain glory; but really to lay out themselves for God, they cannot.

III. Ministers are fishers by office; they are catchers of the souls of men, sent "to open the eyes of the blind, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God," Acts xxvi. 18. Preachers of the gospel are fishers; and their work, and that of fishers, agree in several things.

1. The design and work of fishers is to catch fish. This is the

work that preachers of the gospel have taken in hand, even to endeavour to bring souls to Christ. Their design in their work should be the same. Tell me, O my soul, what is thy design in preaching? for what end dost thou lay the net in the water? is it to shew thy gifts, and to gain the applause of men? Oh! no. Lord, thou knowest my gifts are very small; and had I not some other thing than them to lean to, I had never gone to a pulpit. I confess, that, for as small as they are, the devil and my corruptions do sometimes present them to me in a magnifying glass, and so would blow me up with wind. But, Lord, thou knowest it is my work to repel these motions. An instance of this see in my Diary, Jan. 1. 1699. But of this see afterwards.

2. Their work is hard work; they are exposed to much cold in the water. So is the minister's work.

3. A storm that will affright others, they will venture on, that they may not lose their fish. So should preachers of the gospel do.

4. Fishers catch fish with a net. So preachers have a net to catch souls with. This is the everlasting gospel, the word of peace and reconciliation, wherewith sinners are caught. It is compared to a net wherewith fishers catch fish,

(1.) Because it is spread out, ready to catch all that will come into it, Is. lv. 1. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk, without money, and without price." God excludes none from the benefits of the gospel that will not exclude themselves; it is free to all.

(2.) Because as fish are taken unexpectedly by the net, so are sinners by the gospel. Zaccheus was little thinking on salvation from Christ, when he went to the tree. Paul was not thinking on a sweet meeting with Christ, whom he persecuted, when he was going post-haste on the devil's errand; but the man is caught unexpectedly. Little wast thou thinking, O my soul, on Christ, heaven, or thyself, when thou went to the Newton of Whitsome*, to hear a

* WHITSOME is a parish in the presbytery of CHIRNSIDE, at a place in which, called NEWTON, the Rev. Mr. HENRY ERSKINE, who, in August 1662, had been ejected from CORNHILL in NORTHUMBERLAND, began to exercise his ministry in a meeting-house, upon the coming out of King JAMES's toleration, in 1687, and where he continued till the revolution, when he was settled at CHIRNSIDE. It was probably in the year 1687, that Mr. BOSTON, then a boy only ten years of age, went from DUNSE, where his parents lived, to hear Mr. ERSKINE, by whose ministry he was converted. He speaks of this worthy minister as his spiritual father, afterwards in this soliloquy. This Mr. HENRY ERSKINE was father to the late excellent Messrs EBENEZAR and RALPH ERSKINE, whose praise is in all the churches.

preaching, when Christ first dealt with thee; there thou got an unexpected cast.

(3.) As fish sometimes come near and touch the net, and yet draw back; so many souls are somewhat affected at the hearing of the gospel, and yet remain in the gall of bitterness, and the bond of iniquity. So Herod heard John the Baptist gladly; but yet the poor man was not caught. Wonder not then, O my soul, that thou seest some affected in the time of preaching; and yet when they are away again, all is worn off.

(4.) Some fish that have not been taken fast hold enough by the net, struggle and get out again. So some souls have their convictions, and may seem to be caught; but yet, alas! they stifle all their convictions, stay in the place of the breaking forth; their goodness is like the morning cloud, and as the early dew that soon passeth away. Wherefore, O my soul, if ever thou be taken up with exercised consciences, have a care that thou do not apply the cure before the wound be deep enough. Take all means to understand whether the soul be content to take Christ on his own terms or not. Alas! many this way, by having the wound scurfed over, are rather killed than cured.

(5.) All that are taken in the net do make some struggling to get free. Even so every one whom the Lord deals with by his word and Spirit, make some kind of resistance, before they are thoroughly caught. *Cras, Domine*, says Augustine; *et modo, Domine, donec, modo non haberet modum.* And this thou also knowest, O my soul, how thou wouldst have been content to have been out of the net. Oh! the wickedness of the heart of man by nature! opposite is it, and an enemy to all that may be for its eternal welfare. There is indeed a power in our will to resist, yea, and such a power as cannot but be exercised by the will of man, which can do nothing but resist, till the overcoming power of God, the *gratia victrix*, come and make the unwilling heart willing, Phil. ii. 13.

(6.) Yet this struggling will not do with those which the net has fast enough. So neither will the resistance do that is made by an elect soul, whom God intends to catch, John vi. 37. *All that the Father hath given me, shall come to me.* Indeed God does not convert men to himself against their will, he does not force the soul to receive Christ; but he conquers the will, and it becomes obedient. He that was unwilling before, is then willing. O the power of grace! When God speaks, then men shall hear; then is it that the dead hear the voice of the Son of man, and they that hear do live.

(7.) In a net are many meshes in which the fish are caught. Such

are the invitations made to sinners in the gospel, the sweet promises made to them that will come to Christ; these are the meshes wherewith the soul is catched. This then is gospel-preaching, thus to spread out the net of the gospel, wherein are so many meshes of various invitations and promises, to which if the fish do come, they are caught.—But yet,

(8.) Lest the net be lifted up with the water, and so not fit for taking fish, and the fish slight it, and pass under it; there are some pieces of lead put to it, to hold it right in the water, that it may be before them as they come. So lest invitations and promises of the gospel be slighted, there must be used some legal terrors and law-threatenings to drive the fish into the net. Thou seest then that both law and gospel are to be preached, the law as a pendicle of the gospel-net, which makes it effectual; the law being a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ.

(9.) The meshes must not be over-wide, lest the fish run through. So neither must thy doctrine be general, without particular application, lest thou be no fisher of men. Indeed men may be the better pleased, when thou preachest doctrine so as wicked men may run out-through and in-through it, than when thou makest it so as to take hold of them: but be not a servant of men.

(10.) Neither must they be too neat and fine, and curiously wrought, lest they hold out the fish. So have a care, O my soul, of striving to make by wit any fine and curious discourse, which thy hearers cannot understand. Of this more afterwards.

5. Fishers observe in what places they should cast their nets, and where they may expect fish. So do thou, O my soul, observe where thou mayst catch souls. There are two pools wherein the net should be set.

(1.) In the public assemblies of the Lord's people. There it was that Lydia's heart was opened. The pool of ordinances sometimes is made healing water to souls pining away in their iniquity.

(2.) In private conference. Many times the Lord is pleased to bless this for the good of souls. Some have found it so. But more of these things afterwards, when I come to following Christ.

6. Lastly, Fishers may toil long, and yet catch nothing; but they do not therefore lay aside their work. So may preachers preach long, and yet not catch any soul, Isa. xlix. 4. and liii. 1; but they are not to give over for all that. O my soul, here thou art checked for thy behaviour at some times under the absence of Christ from ordinances, when thou hast been ready to wish thou hadst never taken it in hand. This was my sin: the good Lord pardon it. It becomes me better to lie low under God's hand, and to inquire into

the causes of his withdrawing his presence from me and from ordinances, and yet to hold on in duty till he be pleased to lay me by. Have a care of that, O my soul, and let not such thoughts and wishes possess thee again. Forget not how God made thee to read this thy sin, in thy punishment, Diary, Nov. 13, 1698. Hold on, O my soul, and give not way to these discouragements. Thou knowest not but Christ may come and teach thee to let down the net at the right side of the ship, and thou mayst yet be a fisher of men. Trust God thou shalt yet praise him for the help of his countenance as thou hast done, and perhaps for some souls that thou mayst be yet honoured to catch.

And thus I have briefly considered these things. But the main question that I would have resolved is, How may I come by this art? what way I shall take to be a fisher of men? how I may order and set the net, that it may bring in souls to God? this the great Master of assemblies sets down in the first part of the verse. Whence,

Observe, 2. O my soul, that the way for me to be a fisher of men, is to follow Christ. What it is to follow thee, O Lord, shew me; and, Lord, help me to do it.

Here two things are to be considered.

I. What following Christ supposes and implies.

II. Wherein Christ is to be followed.

I. What following Christ supposes and implies.

First, It presupposes life. A dead man cannot follow any person; a dead preacher cannot follow Christ; there must be a principle of life, spiritual life in him, or else he is nought. Therefore have I said and maintained, that a man cannot be a minister *in foro Dei*, though he may *in foro ecclesiæ*, without grace in his heart. This is a spiritual following of Christ; and therefore presupposes a spiritual and heavenly principle. Tell me then, O my soul, what state art thou in? Thou wast once dead, that is sure, Eph. ii. 1. *dead in trespasses and sins.* Art thou raised out of thy grave? hast thou got a part in the first resurrection? has Christ breathed on thy dead and dry bones? or art thou yet void of spiritual life? art thou rotting away in thine iniquity? What sayest thou to this? If thou be yet dead, thy case is lamentable; but if thou be alive, what signs of life are there to be seen in thee? I have my own doubts of this, because of the prevailing of corruption: therefore I will see what I can say to this.

1. A man that hath the Spirit hath life, Rom. viii. 2, 9; but I think I have the Spirit: *ergo*, I have life. That I have the Spirit, I conclude from these grounds following.

(1.) I have light that sometimes I had not. See John xiv. 26. "The Comforter—shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you." I see now otherwise than sometimes I saw. Once was I blind, but now I see, though I see but men as trees. Once was I darkness, but now am I light (though weak) in the Lord. This light makes me see,

[1.] My former darkness, the sad and miserable state that once I was in, ignorant of God, Christ, and religion, save going to the church, and keeping from banning and swearing, &c. which I was restrained from, from a child. This makes me see my present darkness, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. How little a portion do I know of thee, O God? My knowledge is but as the twilight.

[2.] It lets me see my heart-sins, my imperfections and shortcomings in the best of my duties; so that God might damn me for them. The hypocrites say, *Why have we fasted, and thou seest not?* &c. Isa. lviii. 3. It lets me see the wanderings of my heart in duty and out of duty, yea, the sinfulness of the first risings of lust in mine heart, Rom. vii. and is still discovering the baseness of my heart unto me, so that I am forced to think and say, that at the best I am unclean, unclean.

[3.] It makes me to see Christ precious, (1 Pet. ii. 7,) altogether lovely, the chief among ten thousand, preferable to all the world; for whom, if my heart deceive me not, (Lord, thou knowest,) I would undergo the loss of that which I most esteem in the world. "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none on earth that I desire besides thee." For indeed, "my heart and flesh faints and fails; but thou art the strength of my heart, O Lord," Psal. lxxiii. 25, 26.

[4.] It lets me see my need of him; so that nothing else but Christ, I am persuaded, can help me. When I have done what I can, I am but an unprofitable servant. If I should do a thousand times more than I do, I count all but loss and dung for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord. My soul cries out for thee, O God, and follows hard after thee.

[5.] The knowledge that I have of Christ, makes me trust in him in some measure, Psal. ix. 10; though alas! my evil heart of unbelief creates a great deal of difficulty in that to me. I find him a present help in the time of trouble; therefore I endeavour to cast my burden upon him. I know him to be a good Master; and therefore I lean on him for help for his own work. I know his grace is sufficient for me; therefore, in temptation and trials, I endeavour to lift up my soul to him.

(2.) I feel help in duty from the Spirit. I know not what I

should pray for; but the Spirit helpeth my infirmities, Rom. viii. 26. Many times I have gone to prayer very dead, and have come away with life; I have gone with a drooping and fainting heart, and come away rejoicing; with an heart closed, and have come away with an heart enlarged, and have felt enlargement both as to words and affections; and this hath made me both thankful and more vile in mine own eyes, that God should have done so with the like of me, 1 Chron. xxix. 14.

2. He that hath sense and feeling hath life; but I have sense and feeling: *ergo*, I have life, Eph. iv. 19. My sins are a burden to me, (Matth. xi. 28.) Lord, thou knowest, my omissions and commissions, the sins of my thoughts and of my life, the sins of my youth, &c. and above all, that which is my daily trouble, is an evil, backsliding, and base heart, which I find deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, Jer. xvii. 9. This body of sin and death makes me to groan, and long to be rid of it, Rom. vii. 24. And what a load it was to me this day, God knows. I feel God's presence, which makes me to rejoice sometimes; at other times again I feel his absence. Thou, O Lord, hidest thy face, and I am troubled, Psal. xxx. 7. His smiles are sweet as honey from the comb, and his frowns are bitter as death to my soul.

3. He in whom there is heat hath life; but I have a heat in my soul: *ergo*, I have life. I find a threefold flame, though weak, in my heart.

(1.) A flame of love to Christ, Rom. v. 5. My soul loves him above all; and I have felt my love to Christ more vigorous within this short while, than for a considerable time before. Lord, put fuel to this flame. I have a love to his truths that I know, what God reveals to me of his word, Psal. cxix. 19. I find sometimes his word sweeter to me than honey from the comb, Psal. xix. 10. It comforts and supports me. I cannot but love it; it stirs me up, and quickens my soul when dead. I love his commands, though striking against my corruptions, Rom. vii. 22. I love the promises, as sweet cordials to a fainting soul, as life from the dead to one trodden under foot by the apprehensions of wrath, or the prevailing of corruption. I love his threatenings as most just; my soul heartily approves them. *If any man love not the Lord Jesus, let him be anathema, maranatha.* The least part of truth, that God makes known to me, I love; and, by grace, would endeavour to adhere to. I love those in whom the image of God does appear; though otherwise mean and contemptible, my heart warms towards them, 1 John iii. 14. I love his work, and am glad when it thrives, (Rom. i 8.) though alas! there is little ground for such gladness now. I love

his ordinances, (Psal. lxxxiv. 1.) and what bears his stamp; though all this be but weak I love his glory, that he should be glorified, come of me what will.

(2.) I find in my heart a flame of desires, Matth. v. 6. [1.] After the righteousness of Christ. My soul earnestly desires to be stript naked of my own righteousness, which is as rags, and to be clothed and adorned with the robe of his righteousness. This wedding garment my soul affects; so shall I be found without spot, when the Master of the feast comes in to see the guests. My soul is satisfied, and aquiesces in justification by an imputed righteousness, though, alas! my base heart would fain have a home-spun garment of its own sometimes. [2.] After communion with him, Psal. xlii. 1. When I want it, my soul though sometimes careless, yet, at other times, cries out, *O that I knew where I might find him!* I have found much sweetness, in communion with God, especially at the sacrament of the Lord's supper, in prayer and meditation, hearing the word, faithfully and seriously preached, and in preaching it myself, when the candle of the Lord shines on my tabernacle; then was it a sweet exercise to my soul. I endeavour to keep it up when I have it, by watching over my heart, and sending up ejaculations to God. When I want it, I cry to him for it, though, alas! I have been a long time very careless. Sometimes my soul longs for the day, when my minority shall be over-past, and I be entered heir to *the inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away;* to be quit of this evil world; to be dissolved, and to be with Christ, which is best of all; especially at three times. (1.) When I get more than ordinarily near God, when my soul is satisfied as with marrow and fat, when my heart is nobilitated, and tramples on the world. (2.) When I am wrestling and groaning under the body of sin and death, the evil heart: then fain would I be there, where Satan cannot tempt, and sin cannot enter; yea, when I have been much forsaken, at least as to comfort, Diary, Aug. 2. 1696, where is the most eminent instance of it. (3.) When I preach, and see that the gospel hath not success, but people are unconcerned, and go on in their abominations.

(3.) I find in my heart some heat of zeal for God, which vents itself, [1.] By endeavouring to be active for God in my station. So when I was at K. I endeavoured to do something for God, though, alas! it did some of them no good. Before I entered on trials, one main motive was to have opportunity to give a testimony against sin, and to see if I could be an instrument to reclaim any soul from their wicked way. This I have, as the Lord enabled me, done, since I was a preacher, testifying against sin freely and plainly,

and as earnestly as I could, by grace assisting me, though in weakness. And, Lord, thou knowest that my great desire is to catch men, and to get for that end my whole furniture from thee, laying aside my own wisdom. And if I could do this, how satisfying would it be to my soul, that desires to do good to others, though I myself should perish? Therefore do I not spare this weak body, and therefore have I desired never to be idle, but to go unsent for sometimes. Yet my conscience tells me of much slackness in this point, when I have been in private with people, and have not reproved them as I ought, when they offended, being much plagued with want of freedom in private converse. This I have in the Lord's strength resolved against, and have somewhat now amended it. [2.] It vents itself in indignation against sin in myself and others. Many times have I thought on that of the apostle, *Yea, what revenge!* when I have been overcome by a temptation, being content as it were to be revenged on myself, and as it were content to subscribe a sentence of damnation against myself, and so to justify the Lord in his just proceedings against me. And, *Lord, do not I hate those that hate thee! am I not grieved with those that rise up against thee? The reproaches cast on thee, have fallen on me,* Psal. lxix. 9. And my heart rises and is grieved, when I see transgressors, that they keep not thy law. [3.] It vents itself in grieving for those things that I cannot help. Lord, thou knowest how weighty the sins of this land have been unto me, how they have lien and do lie somewhat heavy on me; and at this time in particular, the laxness of many in joining with the people of these abominations, the unfaithfulness of some professors, the lack of zeal for God in not making a more narrow search for the accursed thing in our camp, now when God's wrath is going out violently against us, and not making an acknowledgement of sins and renewing our national vows, according as our progenitors did, many as it were thinking shame of the covenant, of whom the church of Scotland may be ashamed.

4. Growth and motion is an evidence of life; (Psal. xcii. 12, 13, 14.) I move forward towards heaven, my affections are going out after Christ, and endeavouring to make progress in a Christian walk. I think I discern a growth of these graces in me. (1.) Of knowledge and acquaintance with Christ, 2 Pet. iii. 18. I am more acquainted with Christ and his ways than before. Though I have not such uptakings of Christ as I ought to have, yet I have more than I have had in this respect sometimes before. (2.) A growth of love. If my heart deceive me not, I have found love to Christ within this month more lively and vigorous than before, my soul more affected with his absence from ordinances than ever. (3.) Of faith. I can, I

think, trust God more now than before. I have had more experience of his goodness and knowledge of his name; and therefore think I can cast my burden on the Lord better than before. But it is easy swimming when the head is held up. Lord, increase my faith. I believe, Lord, help mine unbelief. (4.) Of watchfulness. I have felt the sad effects of unwatchfulness over my heart in times past. I feel the good of watchfulness now; my soul is habitually more watchful than before; neither dare I give such liberty to my heart as sometimes I gave. Yet for all this the Lord may well complain of me, that he is broken with my whorish heart. But, Lord, thou knowest, it is also breaking to myself that it is so. The Lord seal these things to me. (5.) Of contempt of the world, which, blessed be God, is on the increase with me.

Secondly, Following Christ implies a knowledge of the way that Christ took. No man can follow the example of another as such, unless he know what way he lived. So neither can any man follow Christ with respect to the catching of men in particular, unless he know Christ's way of catching souls, that is, so far as it may be followed by us. Acquaint then thyself, O my soul, with the history of the gospel, wherein this appears, and take special notice of these things, that thou mayest follow Christ. What a sad case must they be in that are not acquainted with this!

Thirdly, It supposes sense of weakness, and the need of a guide. A man that knows a way, and can do well enough without a guide, needs not follow another. And surely the want of this is the reason why many run before Christ, and go farther than his example ever called them; and others take a way altogether different from Christ's way, which is the product of their own conceited hearts and airy heads. But thou, O my soul, acknowledge thyself as a child in these matters, that cannot go unless it be led; as a stranger in a desert place, that cannot keep the right way without a guide. Acknowledge and be affected with thine own weakness and emptiness, which thou mayst well be persuaded of. And for this end reflect seriously, 1. On that word, 2 Cor. ii. 16. *Who is sufficient for these things?* No man is of himself sufficient; even the greatest of men come short of sufficiency. This may make thee then to be affected with insufficiency, who are so far below these men, as shrubs are below the tall cedars; and yet they cannot teach it of themselves. 2. Consider the weight of the work, even of preaching, which is all that thou hast to do now. It is the concern of souls. By the foolishness of preaching it pleases the Lord to save them that believe, and as thou thoughtest yesterday, [Jan. 22, 1699,] before thou went to the pulpit, it may seal the salvation of some, and the damnation

of others. To preach in the Spirit, in the power and demonstration thereof, is no easy matter. Thy pitiful gifts will not fit thee for this. 3. Reflect on what thou art when God is pleased to desert thee; how then thou tuggest and rowest, but it will not do, either in studying or delivering sermons. I think thou hast had as much of this as may teach thee to beware of taking thy burden on thy own soul, but to cast it on the Lord. [See Diary, June 3, July 3, Dec. 31, 1698. Jan. 6, 1699, &c.] 4. Consider what a small portion thou knowest of God. When thou art at the best, and when thou art in thy meridian, yet how low art thou? and how far short thou comest of what thou shouldst be at. Lastly, consider, that though thou hadst gifts like an angel, yet thou canst not convert a soul, unless Christ be with thee to do the work. Therefore acknowledge thyself a weak creature, insufficient for the work; and go not out in thy own strength, but in the name of the Lord; and so although thou be but as a stripling, thou mayst be helped to cast down the great Goliaths that defy the armies of the living God.

Fourthly, It implies a renouncing of our own wisdom. It must not be the guide that we must follow, Matth. xvi. 24. Paul would not preach with wisdom of words, 1 Cor. i. 17; he did not follow the rules of carnal wisdom. Therefore, O my soul, renounce thine own wisdom. Seek the wisdom that is from above; seek to preach the words of the living God, and not thine own. Since thou wast most set to take this way, and prayed most that thou mightst not preach that which might be the product of thy own wisdom and natural reason, but that which might be given thee of the Holy Ghost, thou hast found that God hath signally countenanced thee. Take not the way of natural wisdom, follow not the rules of carnal wisdom. Its language will always be, *Master, spare thyself;* have a care of thy credit and reputation among men. If thou speak freely, they will call thee a railer, and thy preaching reflections; every parish will scare at thee as a monster of men, and one that would preach them all to hell; and so thou shalt not be settled. Such and such a man, that has a great influence in a parish, will never like thee. That way of preaching is not the way to gain people; that startles them at the very first. You may bring them on by little and little, by being somewhat smooth, at least at the first: for this generation is not able to abide such doctrine as that thou preachest. But hear thou and follow the rules of the wisdom that is from above: for the wisdom of the world is foolishness with God; that which is in high esteem among men, is nought in the sight of God. The wisdom that is from above will tell thee, that thou must be denied to thy credit and reputation, &c. Matth. xvi. 24; Luke

xiv. 26. It will tell thee, Let them call thee what they will, that thou must *cry aloud, and spare not; lift up thy voice like a trumpet, &c.* Is. lviii. 1. It will tell thee, that *God has appointed the bounds of men's habitation*, Acts xvii. 26. It will tell thee, that *not many wise, not many mighty, not many noble are called, &c.* 1 Cor. i. 29. *Whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, thou shalt speak God's words unto them*, Ezek. ii. 7. It will shew thee rules quite contrary to those of carnal wisdom. Let me consider then what carnal wisdom says to me, and what the wisdom from above says.

CARNAL WISDOM.	SPIRITUAL WISDOM.
Thy body is weak, spare it, and weary it not; it cannot abide toil, labour, and weariness; spare thyself then.	Your body is God's as well as your spirit; spare it not for glorifying God, 1 Cor. vi. 20. "In weariness and painfulness," 2 Cor. xi. 27. "He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might he increaseth strength," Is. xl. 29. This thou hast experienced.
Labour to get neat and fine expressions; for these do very much commend a preaching to the learned; and without these they think nothing of it.	Christ sent thee to "preach the gospel not with wisdom of words, 1 Cor. i. 17. Go not to them with "excellency of speech, or of wisdom," 1 Cor. ii. 1. Let not thy speech and preaching be with "the enticing words of man's wisdom," ver. 4.
Endeavour to be somewhat smooth in preaching, and calm; and do not go out upon the particular sins of the land, or of the persons to whom thou preachest.	"Cry aloud, and spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet: shew my people their sins," Is. lviii. 1.—"Open rebuke is better than secret love," Prov. xxvii. 5. "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, rightly dividing the word of truth," 2 Tim. ii. 15.
If thou wilt not do so, they will be irritated against thee, and may create thee trouble; and what a foolish thing would it be for thee to speak boldly to such a generation as this, whose very looks are terrible?	"He that rebuketh a man, afterwards shall find more favour than he that flattereth with the tongue," Prov. xxviii. 23. I have experience of this. "Fear them not, neither be afraid at their looks, though they be a rebellious house. I have made thy face strong against their faces," Ezek. iii. 8, 9. Experience confirms this.
It is a dangerous way to speak freely, and condescend on particulars: there may be more hazard in it than thou art aware of.	"He that walketh uprightly, walketh surely," Prov. x. 9. "Whoso walketh uprightly shall be saved," chap. xxviii. 18.
Thou wilt be looked on as a fool, as a monster of men; thou wilt be called a railer; and so lose thy reputation and credit, and thou hadst need to preserve that. Men will hate and abhor thee; and why shouldst thou expose thyself to these things?	"Thou must become a fool, that thou mayest be wise," 1 Cor. iii. 18. "We are made a spectacle to the world," chap. iv. 9. see ver. 10. "The servant is not greater than his lord," John v. 20. compared with chap. x. 20. "He hath a devil, and

Great people especially will be offended at you, if you speak not fair to them and court and caress them. And if you be looked down upon by great people, who are wise and mighty, what will you think of your preaching?

Our people are new come out from under Prelacy, and they would not desire to have sins told particularly, and especially old sores to be ripped up. They cannot abide that doctrine. Other doctrine would take better with them. Hold off such things; for it may well do them ill, it will do them no good.

If you will preach such things, yet prudence requires that you speak of them very warily. Though conscience says you must, yet speak them somewhat covertly, that you may not offend them sore, and especially with respect to them that are but coming in yet, and do not fill them with prejudices at first; you may get occasion afterwards.

Be but fair especially to them that have the stroke in parishes, till you be settled in a parish to get stipend. If you will not do so, you may look for toiling up and down then; for parishes will scare at you, and will not call you, and how will you live? And so such a way of preaching will be to your loss, whereas otherwise it might be better with you.

is mad, why hear ye him?" If thou wilt be Christ's disciple, "thou must deny thyself," Matth. xvi. 24. "If the world hate you, ye know it hated me before it hated you," John xv. 18. says our Lord.

"Accept no man's person, neither give flattering titles to man: for, in so doing, thy Maker will soon take thee away," Job xxxii. 21, 22. "Few of the rulers believe on Christ," John vii. 48. "Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called," I Cor. i. 26. "Speak thou God's word to kings, and be not ashamed," Psal. cxix. 46.

"Thou shalt speak my words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, for they are most rebellious," Ezek. ii. 7. "Give them warning from me. If thou do it not, they shall die in their sins, but their blood will I require at thy hand," chap. iii. 17, 18. "What the Lord saith to thee, that do thou speak," I Kings xxii. 14.

"Cry aloud, and spare not," Is. lviii. 1. "Cursed be he that doth the work of the Lord deceitfully," Jer. xlviii. 10. "Handle not the word of the Lord deceitfully." Peter, at the first, told the Jews that were but coming in to hear, "Him (Christ) ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain," Acts ii. 23. "Work while it is called today; the night cometh wherein thou canst not work," John ix. 4.

"To have respect of persons is not good; for, for a piece of bread that man will transgress," Prov. xxviii. 21. "The will of the Lord be done," Acts xxi. 14. "God hath determined your time, before appointed, and the bounds of your habitation," Acts xvii. 26. "And his counsel shall stand, oppose it who will," Is. xlvi. 10. "It is God that sets the solitary in families," Psal. lxviii. 6. "If thou be faithful, thou shalt abound with blessings; but if thou makest haste to be rich, thou shalt not be innocent," Prov. xxviii. 20.

Thus thou seest, O my soul, how that carnal wisdom, notwithstanding it speaks fair and with a good deal of seeming reason, is quite contrary to the wisdom that is from above. It promiseth fair,

but its promises are not always performed; it threatens sore, but neither do its threatenings always come to pass; it makes molehills mountains, and mountains molehills: therefore reject the wisdom of the world, for it is foolishness with God. Carnal policy would make thee fear him that can but kill the body, yea that cannot do so much now, and to cast off the true fear of God. O my soul, remember that word, and make use of it for strengthening thee, Prov. xxix. 25. *The fear of man bringeth a snare; but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord, shall be safe.* Never go to seek temporal profit, by putting thy soul in hazard; but *wait* thou *on the Lord, and keep his way, and he shall exalt thee to inherit the land;* Psal. xxxvii. 34. for his way is the safest way, however carnal wisdom may speak otherwise of it, and may account the following of it mere folly; but remember thou, that *the foolishness of God is wiser than men,* 1 Cor. i. 27.

Fifthly, It supposes, that we must not make men our rule, to follow them any farther than they follow Christ. *Be ye followers of me,* says the apostle, *as I am of Christ,* 1 Cor. xi. 1. Wherein they follow Christ I may follow them, but in nothing else. All men are fallible; the greatest of men have had their own spots. Luther's opinion of Christ's corporal presence in the sacrament affords a notable instance of this. Therefore, O my soul, let not man's authority prevail with thee to go off the road at all. If Christ himself tell thee not, O my soul, where he feedeth, thou mayst be left to turn aside to the flocks of his companions. Have a care of putting the servants of the Lord in his own room: but follow thou him.

II. Wherein is Christ to be followed? what are those things in him that I must imitate him in? what was the copy that he did cast, which I must write after, in order to my being a fisher of men? What he did by divine power is inimitable; I am not called to follow him, in converting sinners by my own power; to work miracles for the confirmation of the doctrine that I preach, &c. But there are some things wherein he is imitable, and must be followed by preachers, if they would expect to be made fishers of men.

First, Christ took not on him the work of preaching the gospel without a call, Is. lxi. 1. "For, (says he) the Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek, he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." In this he must be followed by those that would be catchers of men. He was sent by the Father to preach the gospel; he went not to the work without his Father's commission. Men must have a call to this work, Heb. v. 4. They that

run unsent, that take on the work without a call from God, cannot expect to do good to a people, Rom. x. 14. Jer. xxiii. *I sent them not, therefore they shall not profit this people.* Tell me then, O my soul, whether thou hast thus followed Christ or not? Hadst thou a call from God to this work of the preaching of the gospel? or hast thou run unsent?

In answer to this, I must consider that there is a twofold call, an extraordinary and an ordinary call. The first of these I was not to seek, nor may I pretend to it. The question then is, Whether I had an ordinary call from God or not to preach the gospel?

There are these four things in an ordinary call, which do make it up.

1. Knowledge of the doctrine of the Christian religion above that of ordinary professors, 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17. This I endeavoured to get by study, and prayer unto the Lord; and did attain to it in some measure, though far below the pitch that I would be at. My knowledge was lawfully tried by the church, and they were satisfied.

2. Aptness to teach, some dexterity of communicating unto others that knowledge, 1 Tim. iii. 2. 2 Tim. ii. 2. This was also tried by the church, and they were satisfied. This hath been acknowledged by others whom I have taught; and God has given me some measure of it, however small.

3. A will some way ready to take on the work of preaching the gospel, 1 Pet. v. 2. This I had, for any thing I know, since ever the Lord dealt with my soul, unless it was in a time of distress. And though I did a long time sit the call of the church, in not entering on trials, when they would have had me, yet this was not for want of will, but ability for the work, and want of clearness for entering on such a great work at that time. I had notwithstanding some desire to that work, which desire my conscience bears me witness, did not arise from the desire of worldly gain; for I would have desired that then, and would go on in the work now, though there were no such thing to be had by it, yea through grace, though I should meet with trouble for it. Neither was it the love of vainglory, Lord, thou knowest, but that I might be capable to do something for God. I remember, that when I was a boy at the school, I desired to be a preacher of the gospel, because of all men ministers were most taken up about spiritual things. This my desire to the work did then run upon.

4. The call of the church, which I had without any motion from myself, not only to enter on trials, but, being approved, to preach the gospel as a probationer for the ministry; which does say, that what I have done in this work, I have not done without a call from

God in an ordinary way, and that I have not run unsent. For confirmation of this my call, I refer to my Diary, some things to this purpose being noted there, all which I cannot here set down. Perhaps, if leisure permit, I shall extract them by themselves in order. Blessed be the Lord that made my darkness as noon-day.

Secondly, Christ designed his Father's glory in the work. It was not honour, applause, and credit from men that he sought, but purely the Father's glory. Men that design not this, cannot be useful to the church, if it be not *per accidens*. This all actions are to level at; it is that which in all things should be designed as the ultimate end. *Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.* Thou seest then that thou, O my soul, must follow Christ in this, if thou wouldst be a fisher of men. Lift up thy heart to this noble end, and in all, especially in thy preaching of the gospel, keep this before thine eyes. Beware of seeking thy own glory by preaching. Look not after popular applause; if thou do, thou hast thy reward; (Matth. vi. 2.) look for no more. O my soul, invert not the order, Cant. viii. 12. "Thou, O Solomon, must have a thousand, and those that keep the fruit thereof two hundred." Have a care of taking a thousand to thyself, and giving God only two hundred. Let his honour be before thine eyes; trample on thy own credit and reputation, and sacrifice it, if need be, to God's honour. And to help thee to this, consider,

1. That all thou hast is given thee of God. What hast thou that thou hast not received? What an unreasonable thing is it then not to use for his glory what he gives thee; yea, what ingratitude is it? and dost thou not hate the character of an ungrateful person? *Ingratum si dixeris, omnia dixeris.*

2. Consider that what thou hast is a talent given thee by thy great Master to improve till he comes again. If thou improve it for him, then thou shalt get thy reward. If thou wilt make thy own gain thereby, and what thou shouldst improve for him, thou improve for thyself, what canst thou look for then, but that God shall take thy talent from thee, and command to cast thee as an unprofitable and unfaithful servant into utter darkness, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth? God has given some great talents; if they improve them for vain-glory to themselves to gain the popular applause, or the Hosannas of the learned, and so sacrifice all to their own net; what a sad meeting will such have at the great day with Christ? What master would endure that servant, to whom he has given money wherewith to buy a suit of good clothes to his master, if he should take that money, and buy therewith a suit to himself, which his master should have had? How can it be thought that

God will suffer to go unpunished such a preacher as he has given a talent of gifts to, if he shall use these merely to gain a stipend or applause to himself therewith, not respecting the glory of his Master? Wo to thee, O my soul, if thou take this path wherein destroyers of men's souls and of their own, go.

3. Consider that the applause of the world is nothing worth. It is hard to be gotten; for readily the applause of the unlearned is given to him whom the learned despise, and the learned applaud him whom the common people care not for. And when it is got, what have you? A vain empty puff of wind. They think much of thee, thou thinkest much of thyself, and in the mean time God thinks nothing of thee. Remember, O my soul, what Christ said to the Pharisees, Luke xvi. 15. "Ye are they which justify yourselves before men, but God knoweth your hearts. For that which is highly esteemed among men, is an abomination in the sight of God." Let this scare thee from seeking thyself.

4. Consider, that seeking thy own glory is a dreadful and abominable thing. (1.) In that thou then puttest thyself in God's room. His glory should be that which thou shouldst aim at, but then thy base self must be sacrificed too. O tremble at this, O my soul, and split not on this rock, otherwise thou shalt be dashed in pieces. (2.) In that it is the most gross dissembling with God that can be. Thou pretendest to preach Christ to a people; but seeking thy own glory, thou preachest thyself, and not him. Thou pretendest to be commending Christ and the ways of God to souls, and yet in the mean time thou commendest thyself. Will Christ sit with such a mocking of him? O my soul, beware of it; look not for it, but for his glory. Who would not take it for a base affront, to send a servant or a friend to court a woman for him, if he should court her for himself? And will not Christ be avenged on self-preaching ministers much more? (3.) In that it is base treachery and cruelty to the souls of hearers, when a man seeks to please their fancy more than to gain their souls, to get people to approve him more than to get them to approve themselves to God. This is a soul-murdering way, and it is dear-bought applause that is won by the blood of souls. O my soul, beware of this. Let them call thee what they will; but seek thou God's glory and their good.

5. Consider that so to do is a shrewd sign of a graceless, Christless, and faithless heart, John v. 44. *How can ye believe, that receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?* A grain of faith will cure this lightness of the head and heart.

6. Consider, O my soul, thy own vileness? What art thou but a

poor lump of clay, as to thy body, that will soon return to the dust, and be a sweet morsel for the worms that now thou tramplest upon! Hast thou not seen how loathsome the body is many times in life, by filthy boils and other noisome diseases, and after death what an ugly aspect it has? Forget not the sight that thou sawest once in the churchyard of Dunse, how a body, perhaps sometime beautiful, was like thin mortar, but much more vile and abominable. The time will come that thou wilt be such thyself. But what art thou as to thy heart, but a vile, base, and ugly thing, so many filthy idols to be found there, like a swarm of the worst of vermine? Art thou not as a cage full of unclean birds! What thoughtest thou of thyself on Monday night, Jan. 16, 1699? What unbelief sawest thou there, what baseness of every kind? And what day goes over thee, but thou seest still something in thee to humble thee? And what wast thou that God has employed in this work? Those that were sometime thy fellows are mean and despised; and wilt thou for all this seek thy own glory? Wo unto thee if thou dost so.

7. Consider, That "Him that honoureth God, God will honour; but he that despiseth him, shall be lightly esteemed." *Have respect*, O my soul, with Moses, *to the recompense of reward*, and beware of preferring thy own to the interest of Christ, lest thou be classed among those that seek their own, and not the things of Christ.

8. *Lastly*, Consider what Christ has done for thee. Forget not his goodness, his undeserved goodness to such a base wretch as thou art. Remember him from the land of the Hermonites, and from Mizar-hill; and let love to him predominate in thee, and thou shalt then be helped to sacrifice all to his glory.

Thirdly, Christ had the good of souls in his eye. He came to seek and save that which was lost; he came to seek the lost sheep of the house of Israel. So he sent out the apostle to *open the eyes of the blind, to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.* Follow Christ in this, O my soul, that thou mayst be a fisher of men. When thou studiest thy sermons, let the good of souls be before thee; when thou preachest, let this be thy design, to endeavour to recover lost sheep, to get some brands plucked out of the burning; to get some converted, and brought in to thy Master. Let that be much in thy mind, and be concerned for that, whatever doctrine thou preachest. Consider, O my soul, for this effect,

1. What the design of the gospel is. What is it but this? This is the *finis operis;* and if it be not the *finis operantis*, it is very lamentable. It is the everlasting gospel that Christ has made manifest, declaring the will of God concerning the salvation of man.

2. Consider wherefore God did send thee out. Was it to win a livelihood to thyself? Wo to them that count gain godliness; that will make the gospel merely subservient to their temporal wants. Rather would I perish for want than win bread that way. Well then, was it not to the effect thou mightst labour to gain souls to Christ? Yea, it was. Have a care than that thou be not like some that go to a place, being sent thither by their master, but forget their errand, when they come there, and trifle away their time in vanity and fooleries.

3. Consider the worth of souls. If thou remember that, thou canst not but have an eye to their good. The soul is a precious thing: which appears if thou consider, (1.) Its noble endowments, adorned with understanding, capable to know the highest object; will to choose the same; affections to pursue after it, to love God, hate sin, in a word, to glorify God here, and to enjoy him here and hereafter. (2.) It must live or die for ever. It shall either enjoy God through all the ages of eternity, or remain in endless torments for evermore. (3.) No worldly gain can counterbalance the loss of it. "What shall it profit a man, if he should gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (4.) It cost Christ his precious blood ere it could be redeemed. It behoved him to bear the Father's wrath, that the elect should have borne through all eternity; and no less would redeem it. So that the redemption of the soul is indeed precious. (5.) Christ courts the soul. He stands at the door, and knocks, to get in. The devil courts it with his baits and allurements. And wilt thou, O my soul, be unconcerned for the good of that which is so much courted by Christ and the devil both? Be ashamed to stand as an unconcerned spectator, lest thou show thyself none of the Bridegroom's friends.

4. Consider the hazard that souls are in. Oh! alas, the most part are going on in the high way to destruction, and that blindfolded. Endeavour then to draw off the vail. They are as brands in the fire: wilt thou then be so cruel as not to be concerned to pluck them out? If so, thou shalt burn with them, world without end, in the fire of God's vengeance, and the furnace of his wrath, that shall be seven times more hot for unconcerned preachers than others.

5. Consider what a sad case thou thyself wast in, when Christ concerned himself for thy good. Thou wast going on in the way to hell as blind as a mole; at last Christ opened thine eyes, and let thee see thy hazard, by a preacher (worthy Mr. H. Erskine) * that

* See the foot-note above, page 11. Several remarkable anecdotes of this eminent

was none of the unconcerned Gallios, who spared neither his body, his credit, nor reputation, to gain thee, and the like of thee. And wilt thou preach unconcerned for others? I should abhor myself as the vilest monster, in so doing. Lord, my soul rises at it when I think on it. My soul hates, and loathes that way of preaching: but without thee, I can do nothing. Lord, rather strike me dumb, than suffer me to preach unconcerned for the good of souls; for so I should murder neither my own soul, nor those of others.

6. Consider that unconcernedness for the good of souls in preaching, argues, (1.) A dead lifeless heart, a loveless soul, with respect to Christ. If thou hast any life or love to Christ, darest thou be unconcerned in this matter? Nay, sure, he that has life will move; and he that hath love, will be concerned for the propagating of Christ's kingdom. (2.) Unbelief of the threatenings of God especially. For if thou believe that the wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God, thou canst not preach to them as if thou wert telling a tale. If thou believe that they must depart into everlasting fire, thy heart will not be so frozen as to be unconcerned for them. The sight of it by faith will thaw thy frozen heart. (3.) A stupid heart, and so a hateful frame. Who would not abhor a watchman that saw the enemy coming on, if he should bid them only in the general provide to resist their enemies, or should tell them that the enemy were coming on, so unconcernedly as they might see he cared not whether they should live or perish? And what a hateful stupidity is it in a preacher of the gospel to be unconcerned for souls, when they are in such hazard?

7. The devil shames such preachers. He goes about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour; and they, set to keep souls, creep about like a snail. He is in earnest when he tempts; but such are unconcerned whether people hear, or forbear to hear their invitations, reproofs, &c. Yea, how concerned are the devil's ministers that agent his business for him? They will compass sea and land to gain one proselyte. And shall the preachers of the gospel be unconcerned?

8. If it be so that thou be unconcerned for the good of souls, it seems thou camest not in by the door, but hast broken over the wall, and art but a thief and a robber, John x. 1, compared with verse 12. "He that is an hireling, seeth the wolf coming, fleeth, and leaveth the sheep, and the wolf catcheth them." Ver. 15, "The hireling

minister may be seen in WODROW's History of the Sufferings of the Church of Scotland, vol. ii. page 256, and in CALAMY's continuation of the account of the ejected ministers, vol. ii. page 678 ET SEQ. Mr. Boston gives a particular account of his conversion in his Diary and Memoirs.

fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep." O my soul, if at any time thou findest thy heart unconcerned then, not having the good of souls before thee, remember this.

9. Lastly, thou canst not expect God's help, if thou forgettest thy errand. Hast thou not known and experienced, that these two, God's help in preaching, and a concernedness for the good of souls, have gone with thee *pari passu?* O my soul, then endeavour to be much in following of Christ this way, setting the good of souls before thine eyes; and if thou dost so, thou mayst be a fisher of men, though thou knowest it not.

Fourthly, Christ had not only the good of souls before his eyes, but he was much affected with their case; it lay heavy on his spirit. There are these four things wherein this appeared, that occur to me, with which he was much affected.

1. He had compassion on the multitude, because they were as sheep without a shepherd, Matth. ix. 36. That the people wanted true pastors, was affecting to him; he had compassion on them. Follow Christ in this, O my soul; pity them that wander as sheep without a shepherd. And let this consideration move thee, when thou goest to preach in planted congregations, where thou wilt even see many that are wandering, though they have faithful pastors.* Look on them as sheep not better for them than if they wanted a shepherd. But especially when thou goest to vacant congregations, pity them, commiserate their case, as sheep wanting a shepherd; which no doubt will be a notable means to make thee improve well the little time allowed thee for gathering them in. Be affected with their case; and, for this end, consider,

(1.) That such are in a perishing condition: *Where no vision is, the people perish.* They are ignorant, no wonder, they have none to instruct them; they have lean souls, no wonder, they have none to break the bread of life to them; they wander from God's way, they have none to watch over them, and so the devil takes his opportunity.

(2.) Consider that for the most part here at least, [This was written while I preached in the presbytery of Stirling] people are deprived of watchmen, in regard of the malignancy and ticklishness of their superiors; so that though the people would ever so gladly receive one to break the bread of life to them, yet they cannot get

* The author probably speaks here of people in different parishes, who, though privileged with faithful ministers, yet, through attachment to Prelacy, would not hear them; or of some people called Cameronians or Old Dissenters, who refused to countenance the revolution church, because she had not renewed the covenants. Mr. Boston met with no little trouble from these last after his settlement at Ettrick. How far will misguided zeal lead some otherwise well-meaning people!

their will, by reason of these keeping it from them.* It would make thy heart to relent, if thou sawest a child that would be content to have a pedagogue to guide him, seeing he acknowledges he cannot do it himself, if notwithstanding his tutor should not allow him one, but stand in the way of it, and so the child be lost for want of a pedagogue. So, O my soul, commiserate thou the case of those who would fain have one to watch over their souls, but yet they that should employ their authority, power, wit, &c. to find out one for them, either lie by or oppose the same.

(3.) Consider the many souls that go out of time into eternity, during the time that they want a shepherd. They have none to instruct them, none to let them see their hazard, none to comfort them, when death comes, but they slip away, many of them at least, as the brutes that perish. Thou hast found this to have been a cause of thy commiserating such before now, when thou hast spoken to such being a dying. If this be well considered, and laid to heart, thou canst not but pity them on that very account, which will stir thee up to employ the little time thou hast among them, so as they may be fitted for death.

2. Christ wept, because people in their day did not know, *i. e.* do, the things that belonged to their peace, Luke xix. 41, 42. When he thought upon this their stupidity, it made the tears trinkle down his precious cheeks. O my soul, thou hast this ground of mourning, this day, wherever thou goest. Who are they that are concerned to do what is necessary to be done in order to their peace with God? Few or none are brought in to Christ. It is rare to hear now of a soul converted; but most part are sleeping on in their sins in this their day, like to sit the day of God's patience with them, till patience be turned into fury. Many heart-melting considerations to this purpose may be found. I shall only say this *in cumulo*, that such a case is most deplorable, in the noon-tide of the day that people should venture on the feud of such a dreadful enemy as God is, and should sit as quiet even when the sword of vengeance is hanging by a hair over their heads, and notwithstanding that every day may be, for ought I know, their last day, every sermon the last that ever they shall hear, and that ere the next day these enemies shall be made to rencounter with the terrible and dreadful Majesty, who shall go through them as thorns and briers, and burn them up together, by the fire of his wrath, world without end. O my soul, how

* Some of the curates, through the favour of the great, continued in their churches for many years after the revolution, in several parts of the kingdom, and particularly in some parishes belonging to the synod of Perth and Stirling, as well as the north.

canst thou think of this, and not be more affected with the case of people as they are now-a-days? Sure, if thou couldst weep, here is ground enough for tears of blood.

3. He was grieved for the hardness of people's hearts, Mark iii. 5. It was ground of grief to the Lord Jesus, that people were so hardened, that no means used for their amendment would do them good. Follow Christ in this, O my soul; be grieved and affected with the hardness of the hearts of this generation. O what hardness of heart mayst thou see in every corner, whither thou goest, and where thou preachest, most part being as unconcerned as the very stones of the wall; and say what thou wilt, either by setting before them alluring promises, or dreadful threatenings, yet people are hardened against both, none relenting for what they have done, or concerned about it, though thou wouldst preach till thy eyes leap out. O happy they whose time God has brought to a period, and taken to himself! Happy servants whom God has called out of the vineyard, before the ground grow so hard that almost all labour was in vain! This is a time of mourning for the preachers of the gospel, for people are strangely hardened. Which is the more lamentable, O my soul, if thou consider, (1.) What God has done even for this generation. He has taken off from our necks the yoke of tyranny and arbitrary power, and has given deliverance from Prelatic bondage; and yet for all this the generation is hardened. (2.) If thou consider how the Lord has been dealing with us by rods. For some time there was great dearth of fodder for beasts; yet that stirred us not up. Afterwards was death of cattle; yet we have not returned to the Lord. Then followed death of men, women, and children. He has sent blasting among our corns. This is now, I suppose, the fourth year of our dearth.* And for all these things we remain hardened. *O Lord, thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; thou hast consumed them, but they refuse to receive correction; they make their faces harder than a rock, they refuse to return.* What shall be the end of such hardness as this? (3.) It is yet more lamentable, in regard the plague of hardness seems to be uni-

* The author here mentions the great dearth and famine that prevailed in Scotland for several years before the 1700, chiefly owing to unfavourable harvests. Of this melancholy accounts may be seen in several pamphlets published at that time. At this day it is too evident the Lord is exercising us in some measure with the same judgment, while still greater hardness of heart and impenitency prevails among all ranks, accompanied with monstrous luxury and abuse of mercies, greater than ever was known in this poor kingdom. God grant we may not again experience this judgment, of the breaking of the staff of bread, in the same dreadful manner as our ancestors felt it. "Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel."

versal. It is not only the wicked, or openly profane, or those that have no religion, but the professors of religion that are hardened in part. Oh my soul, this is a day wherein Scotland's pillars are like to fail, a day wherein the hands of our Moseses are like to fall, and Amalek is like to prevail. Many professors desire to hear the causes of God's wrath searched into, but they are not mourning over them; and truly it is most lamentable, that those among us who as, so many Joshuas should be discovering the Achans in our camp, that are the troublers of Israel, by a strange kind of dealing are very wary in meddling therewith, or to show them unto people.* And it is much to be feared, that there are among us some accursed things that are not yet found out. O that God would put it in the hearts of Zion's watchmen to discover what these Achans are, and that preachers were obliged even by the church to speak more freely of the sins of the land. But, alas! O Lord, why hast thou hardened all of us from thy fear? (4.) If thou consider, that this hardness of heart is a token of sad things yet to come. *Who hath hardened himself against God, and prospered?* Job x. 4. Alas! it is a sad prognostic of a further stroke, that seeing we will not be softened either by word or rod, therefore the Lord will thus do to us; and seeing he will do thus, we may prepare to meet the Lord coming in a way of more severe judgment against us. Sad it is already; many families are in a deplorable condition, and yet nothing bettered by the stroke; and what a sad face will this land have, if it be continued? Spare, O Lord, thine inheritance, thy covenanted people, and make us rather fall on such methods as may procure the removal of the stroke. These, and many other things, O my soul, may indeed make thee grieved for the hardness of this generation.

Fifthly, Christ was much in prayer; and that, 1. Before he preached, as Luke ix. 18. Follow him in this, O my soul. Thou hast much need to pray before thou preachest. Be busy with God in prayer, when thou art thinking on dealing with the souls of men. Let thy sermons be sermons of many prayers. Well doth prayer

* The author probably means some people who had felt the rigour of the persecution in the infamous reigns before the revolution, or were attached to the testimony of these sufferers, and were grieved that a more particular and full enumeration of the grounds of the Lord's controversy was not made in acts for fasts emitted by the church after the revolution; who, however, were not suitably employed in mourning over them. And he also insinuates the policy of some leaders in the church, by whose means chiefly a thorough scrutiny into the grounds of the Lord's contending with the church and land at this time, was in a great measure impeded. But if there was ground of complaint for this, at that time, how sad is our present case, when there has not been a national fast for several years, and not one appointed by the church for more than forty!

become every Christian, but much more a preacher of the gospel. Three things, said Luther, make a divine, *tentatio, meditatio, et precatio.* Be stirred up, O my soul, to this necessary work; and for this end consider,

1. That thou canst not otherwise say of thy preaching, *Thus saith the Lord.* How wilt thou get a word from God, if thou do not seek it; and how canst thou seek it but by earnest prayer? If otherwise, thou mayst get something that is the product of thy empty head to mumble over before the people, and spend a little time with them in the church. But O it is a miserable preaching where the preacher can say, *Thus say I to you,* but no more; and cannot say, *Thus saith the Lord.*

2. Consider thy own insufficiency and weakness, together with the weight of the work, *Who is sufficient for these things?* which if thou do, thou wilt not dare study without prayer, nor yet pray without study, when God allows thee time for both. It is a weighty work to bring sinners in to Christ, to pluck the brands out of the fire. Hast thou not great need then to be serious with God before thou preach?

3. Consider that word, Jer. xxiii. 22. "But if they had stood in my counsel, and had caused my people to hear my words, then they should have turned them from their evil way." There is no doubt but preachers not standing in God's counsel this day, and not making men to hear God's words, is one great reason of the unsuccessfulness of the gospel. Now this way, to wit, prayer in faith, is the most proper expedient for acquaintance with the counsel of God. Neglect it not then. O my soul, bnt be much in the duty.

Lastly, Remember, that thou hast found much good of such a practice, and hast found much of the Lord's help both in studying and preaching, by so doing. For which cause thou allottest the Sabbath morning entirely to that exercise, and meditation, if thou canst get it done. Wherefore let this be thy work. And there are these things which thou wouldst specially mind to pray for with respect to this.

(1.) That thou mayst have a word from the Lord to deliver unto them; that thou mayst not preach to them the product of thy own wisdom, and that which merely flows from thy reason; for this is poor heartless preaching.

(2.) That thy soul may be affected with the case of the people to whom thou preachest. If that be wanting, it will be tongue preaching, but not heart-preaching.

(3.) That thy heart may be inflamed with zeal for the glory of thy Master; that out of love to God, and love to souls thy preaching may flow.

(4.) That the Lord may preach it into thy own heart, both when thou studiest and deliverest it. For if this be not, thou shalt be like one that feeds others, but starves himself for hunger; or like a way-mark, that shews the way to men, but never moves a foot itself.

(5.) That thou mayst be helped to deliver it; and that, (1.) With a suitable frame, thy heart being affected with what thou speakest; (2.) Faithfully, keeping up nothing that the Lord gives thee; and, (3.) Without confusion of mind, or fear of man.

(6.) That thou mayst have bodily strength allowed for the work, that thy indisposition disturb thee not.

Lastly, That God would countenance thee in the work with his presence and power in ordinances, to make the word spoken a convincing and converting word to them that are out of Christ; a healing word to the broken; confirming to the weak, doubting and staggering ones, &c.; that God himself would drive the fish into the net, when thou spreadest it out. In a word, that thou mayst be helped to approve thyself to God, as a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

2. After preaching, Christ was taken up in this work, Mark vi. 46. Matth. xiv. 23. *And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray.* Follow Christ in this, O my soul. It is better to do this, than go away with the great people in the afternoon; which I shun as much as I can; and when at any time I do it, it is a kind of torment to me; which I have shunned, and do resolve to shun more; and if at any time I be necessitated to go, that I shall spend more time alone through grace. Pray to God, O my soul, that thy labours be not unsuccessful; that what thou hast delivered, may not be as water spilt on the ground. Pray for pardon of thy failings in public duties; and that God may accept of thy mite which thou givest with a willing mind; that he would not withdraw his blessing because of thy failings; but that he would be pleased to water with the dew of heaven the ground wherein thou didst sow the seed, that it may spring up in due time; that the word preached may be as a nail fastened by the Master of assemblies, so as the devil may not be able to draw it out. Think not, O my soul, that thy work is over, and thou hast no more to do, when the people are dismissed. No, no; it is not so. Think with thyself, that the devil was as busy as thou wast, when thou wast preaching; and that afterwards he is not idle. And shall he be working to undo thy work, and thou unconcerned to hold it together? O no, it must not be so; God will not be pleased with this. And alas! I have been too slack in this point before this: Lord,

help me to amend. If a man had a servant that would go out and sow his seed very diligently and faithfully; but would come in, and sit down idle when it is sown, and forget to harrow it, and hide it with the earth; would the master be well pleased with him? yea, would he not be highly displeased, because the fowls would come and pick it up? So, O my soul, if thou shouldst be never so much concerned to get good seed, and never so faithful and diligent in sowing it; yet if after thou turn careless, and take not the way to cover it, by serious seeking to the Lord, that he may keep it in the hearts of people, and make it to prosper, the devil may pick it all up; and where is thy labour then; and how will the Lord be pleased with thee! Therefore pray more frequently, cry more fervently to God, when the public work is over, than thou hast done; and endeavour to be as much concerned when it is over, as when thou wast going to it. I do not doubt, but many times, when thou preachest, some get checks and convictions of guilt; some perhaps are strengthened; but both impressions wear off very soon. I fear thou must confess, and take with a sinful hand in this, in that thou dost not enough labour to get the seed covered when it is sown, and the nail driven farther in when it is entered. Though many times thy body is wearied after the public work, yet sure thou mayst do more than thou dost; and if thy soul were more deeply affected, the weariness of body would not be so much in thy mind; but thou wouldst trample on it, that thou might get good done by thy work, and souls might not always thus be robbed by that greedy vulture and roaring lion, the enemy of thy own salvation, and the salvation of others. Although he has been as busy to do harm all the day to souls as thou hast been to do good, yet he will not complain of weariness at night. Take courage then, O my soul, and be strong in the Lord; and do not give it over to this enemy; endeavour to hold him at the staff's end. Thou hast a good second; Christ is concerned for his own seed as well as thou. Go on then, and be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, and let that ravenous fowl never get a grain away as long as thou canst get it kept from him. Thus then, O my soul, follow Christ, in being taking up in this so necessary an exercise. Thy Lord and Master had no wants to get made up, there was no fear of his failing in this work of the gospel; yet he prayed, to give all, and especially preachers of his word, an example. Lay not aside the pattern then, but write after his copy even in this.

Sixthly, Christ contemned the world; he slighted it as not meet for any of his followers. He became poor, that we might become rich, Matth. viii. 20. He gave himself entirely, at least after his

inauguration, to matters that concerned the calling he had to the work of the gospel, John ix. 4. All, especially preachers, are to follow Christ in the contempt of the world. Yet we must beware of imitating him in those things which we are not commanded to follow, as voluntary poverty, this being a part of his satisfaction for the sins of the elect. Neither doth this exempt the preachers of the gospel from a lawful provision of things necessary for themselves, or others they are concerned in; for the apostle tells us, that he is worse than an infidel, who doth not provide for his family, 1 Tim. v. 8. where church-men are not excepted. Yea, it is clear that the ministers of the gospel may sometimes work with their hands for their maintenance, either when the iniquity of the times wherein they live does not allow them what may be for their maintenance, or when the taking of it will hinder the propagation of the gospel, as is clear by the practice of the apostle Paul. So that that in which, with respect to this, thou art to follow Christ, O my soul, is, that thou do not needlessly involve thyself in worldly matters, to the hindrance of the duties of thy calling and station. As thou art a preacher of the gospel, other things must cede and give place to that. This is that which our Lord teaches us, Matth. viii. 22. *Follow thou me; and let the dead bury their dead:* and the apostle, 2 Tim. ii. 4. *No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life.* Which was a thing not observed by some, especially our bishops, who acted as magistrates, as well as ministers; a thing which our Lord absolutely refused; *Who made me a judge or a ruler?* says he; yet digested by them, being an infallible sign of their ignorance of the weight of that work. And in my opinion it is not observed either by some ministers now-a-days, who when they have their glebes and stipends sufficient for their maintenance, do notwithstanding take more land a-farming. For my part, I see not how such can be said not to entangle themselves with the affairs of this life, and go beyond what doth become them as ministers of the gospel. Neither of these are my temptation now, being a probationer. But seeing I am unsettled, a corrupt heart and a subtile devil may take advantage of me, if I be not wary, and by their arguments from my present state may cast me off my feet, if I take not heed. Therefore, O my soul,

1. Beware of preaching smoothly upon the account of getting a call from any parish. Have a care, that the want of that, viz. a call, do not put thee upon men-pleasing. No, no; that must not be thy business. Remember, God provides for thee even now liberally, as he sees fit. Thou dost not want even so much of the world as is very necessary; and he that has provided for thee hitherto, yea,

took thee, and kept thee from the womb, will not forsake thee as long as thou dost not forsake him, but remainest faithful. Remember, God hath set the bounds of thy habitation, and determined the time. Though men and devils should oppose it, they shall not be able to hinder it. It is God himself that sets the solitary in families; and why shouldst thou go out of God's way to procure such a thing to thyself, or to antedate the time which is appointed of God; Go on in faithfulness, fear not; God can make, yea will make a man's enemies to be his friends, when his ways please the Lord. And though their corruptions disapprove of thy doctrine, and thyself for it, yet their consciences may be made to approve it, and God may bind them up, that they shall not appear against thee. Remember what J. B. thy known enemy, said and how he carried. See more to this purpose before, in the comparison of spiritual and carnal wisdom, p. 21, 22. And what though thou shouldst never be settled in any charge at all? Christ and his apostles were itinerants. If the Lord see it fit, why shouldst thou be against it? If the Lord have something to do with thee in diverse corners of his vineyard, calling thee sometimes to one place, sometimes to another, thou art not to quarrel that. Perhaps thou mayest do more good that way than otherwise. If thou hadst been settled at home, then some souls here, which perhaps have got good of thy preaching, would have been deprived of it at least as from thee; and God will always give thee meat as long as he gives thee work; and go where thou wilt, thou canst not go out of thy Father's ground. Further, if thou shouldst take that way, and transgress for a piece of bread, thou mayst come short of thy expectation for all that, and lose both the world and a good conscience. But suppose thou shouldst by that means gain a call and a good stipend, thou losest a good conscience, which is a continual feast. For how can such a practice be excused from simony, seeing it is *munus a lingua;* and it is a certain symptom that a preacher seeks not them, but theirs; and so thou gettest it, and the curse of God with it. No; Lord, in thy strength, I resolve never to buy ease and wealth at such a dear rate.

2. Beware that thou close with no call upon the account of stipend. Lay that by when thou considerest the matter. See what clearness thou canst get from the Lord, when any call may be given thee, and walk according to his mind, and the mind of the church. Wo is me if a stipend should be that which should engage me to a place. I would shew myself a wretched creature. Consider matters then abstracting from that. For surely,

(1.) This is direct simony; selling the gift of God for money.

Let their money perish with themselves, that will adventure to do so. Such are buyers and sellers, that God will put out of his temple. Such are mere hirelings, working for wages; and too much of Balaam's temper is to be found there.

(2.) That will provoke God to curse your blessings, and to send a moth among that which thou mayst get; and it surely will provoke God to send leanness to thy soul, as he did with the Israelites in the wilderness, when he gave them what they were seeking.

(3.) Thou canst not expect God's blessing on thy labours, but rather that thou shouldst be a plague to a people whom you so join with. In a word, thou wouldst go in the wrong way, and be discountenanced of God, when you have undertaken the charge.

There is yet a third case wherein this contempt or slighting of the world should appear in one sent to preach the gospel; that is, when a man is settled, and has encouragement or stipend coming in to him, and so must needs have worldly business done, especially if he be not single, whereby he is involved in more trouble thereabouts, than any in my circumstances for the time are. In such a case a minister would endeavour to meddle as little as he can with these things, but shun them as much as lies in him, especially if he have any to whom he can well trust the management of his affairs. For surely the making of bargains or pursuing them are not the fit object of a minister's employment. Not that I mean simply a man may not do that, and yet be a fisher of men; but that many times the man that takes such trouble in the things of the world to catch them, indisposes himself for the art of man-fishing. But this not being my case, I pass it, referring any rules in this case how to walk till the Lord be pleased so to tryst me, if ever. Only do thou, O my soul, follow Christ in the contempt of the world. Do not regard it. Thou mayst use it as a staff in thine hand, but not as a burden on thy back, otherwise the care of souls will not be much in thy heart. And to help thee to this contempt of the world, consider,

(1.) The vanity of the world. Solomon knew well what it was to have abundance, yet he calls *all vanity of vanities, all is but vanity.* The world is a very empty thing, it cannot comfort the soul under distress. No; the body it can do no good to when sore diseases do afflict it. The world cannot profit a man in the day of wrath. When God arises to plead with a person, his riches avail nothing. When he lies down on a death-bed, they can give him no comfort, though all his coffers were full. When he stands before the tribunal of God, they profit him nothing. Why then should such an useless and vain thing be esteemed?

(2.) Consider that the love of the world where it predominates, is a sign of want of love to God: *If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.* Yea, even in a gracious soul, in so far as the love of the world sways the heart, in so far doth the love of God decay. They are as the scales of the balance, as the one goes up, the other goes down.

(3.) Consider the uncertainty of worldly things. They are as a bird that takes the wings of the morning, and flees away. Set not thy heart then on that which is not. How many and various changes as to the outward state are in a man's life! The beggar may well say, *Hodie mihi, cras tibi.* Men sometimes vile are exalted, honourable men are depressed; and the world is indeed *volubilis rota;* that part which is now up, shall ere long be down. Seest thou not that there is no constancy to be observed in the world, save a *constant inconstancy?* All things go on in a constant course of vicissitude. Nebuchadnezzar in one hour is walking with an uplifted heart in his palace, saying, *Is not this great Babylon that I have built, &c.?* and the next driven from men, and made to eat grass as an ox. Herod in great pomp makes an oration, the people cry out, *It is the voice of a God, and not of a man,* and he is immediately eaten up of worms. The rich man to-day fares sumptuously on earth, and to-morrow cannot get a drop of water to cool his tongue.

(4.) Consider the danger that people are in by worldly things, when they have more than daily bread. The rich man in Luke xii. felt this to be a stumbling-block on which he broke his neck. The young man in the gospel, for love of what he had of the world, parted with Christ, heaven and glory, and so made a sad exchange. Prosperity in the world is a dangerous thing; it is that which *destroys fools,* Prov. i. 32. When Jeshurun waxed fat, he kicked against God, and forgat the Lord that fed him, Deut. xxxii. 15. It was better for David when he was on the one side of the hill, and his enemies on the other, and so in great danger, than when he was walking at ease on his house-top, when he espied Bathsheba washing herself. And of this, O my soul, thou hast had the experience. Our Lord tells us, that it is very hard for a rich man to be saved; and teaches us, that it is hard to have riches, and not set the heart on them. What care and toil do men take to themselves to get them! what anxiety are they exercised with, and how do they torment themselves to keep them! and when they are got and kept, all is not *operæ pretium* to them. Many by riches and honour, &c. have lost their bodies, and more have lost their souls. It exposes men to be the object of others, as Naboth was even for his vineyard; and *who can stand before envy?* Prov. xxvii. 4. See 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10.

This ruined Naboth, 1 Kings xxi. *Da ebolum Belisario, quem virtus extulit, invidia depressit.* So that he that handles the world, can very hardly come away with clean fingers. It is a snake in the bosom, that, if God prevent it not by his grace, may sting thy soul to death.

5. Remember the shortness and the uncertainty of thy time. Thou art a tenant at will, and knowest not how soon thou mayst remove; and thou canst carry nothing with thee. Therefore having food and raiment, (which the Lord does not let thee want), be therewith content, 1 Tim. vi. 7, 8. Thou art a stranger in this earth, going home to thy Father's house, where there will be no need of such things as the world affords. Why shouldst thou then, O my soul, desire any more than will carry thee to thy journey's end? Art thou going to set up thy tent on this side Jordan to dwell here? Art thou saying, It is good for me to be here? Art thou so well entertained abroad, that thou desirest not to go home? No, no. Well then, O my soul, gird up the loins of thy mind. Thou art making homeward, and thy Father bids thee run and make haste: go then, and take no burden on thy back; lest it make thee halt by the way, and the doors be shut ere thou reachest home, and so thou lie without through the long night of eternity.

And to shut up all, remember that there are other things for thee to set thy affections on than the things of this world. There are things above that merit thy affections. Where is Christ, heaven and glory, when thou lookest upon the world, highly esteeming it? Seest thou no beauty in it to ravish thy heart? Surely the more thou seest in him, the less thou wilt see in the world. And hath not experience confirmed this to thee? Alas, when the *beauty* of the upper house is in my offer, that ever I should have any kindness for the world, that vile dwarf and monster, that shall at the last be seen by me all in a fire. *Sursum cor*, O my soul! thou lookest too low. Behold the King in his glory; look to him that died for thee, to save thee from this present evil world. See him sitting at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven. Behold the crown in his hand to give thee, when thou hast overcome the world. Behold the recompense of reward bought to thee with his precious blood, if thou overcome. Ah! art thou looking after toys, and going off thy way to gather the stones of the brook, when thou art running for a crown of gold, yea more than the finest gold? Does this become a man in his right wits? Yea, does it not rather argue madness, and a more than brutish stupidity? The brutes look down, but men are to look up. They have a soul capable of higher things than what the world affords: therefore,

Pronaque cum spectent animalia cætera terram,
Os homini sublime dedit, cœlumque tueri
Jussit, et erectos ad sidera tollere vultus.

Be then of a more noble spirit than the earth-worms. Let the swine feed on husks. Be thou of a more sublime spirit: trample on those things that are below. Art thou clothed with the sun? get the moon under thy feet then; despise it, look not on it with love, turn from it, and pass away. Let it not move thee if thou be poor, Christ had not where to lay his head. Let not the prospect of future troublesome times make thee solicitous how to be carried through; for "thou shalt not be ashamed in the evil days, and in the days of famine thou shalt be satisfied." God hath said it, Psal. xxxvi. 19. therefore do thou believe it. Be not anxious about thy provision for old age, for by all appearance thou wilt never see it. It is more than probable thou wilt be sooner at thy journey's end. Thy body is weak; it is even stepping down to salute corruption as its mother, ere it has well entered the hall of the world: thy tabernacle pins seem to be drawing out by little and little already. Courage then, O my soul; ere long the devil, and the world, and the flesh shall be bruised under thy feet; and thou shalt be received into eternal mansions. But though the Lord should lengthen out thy days to old age, he that brought thee out of thy mother's belly, will not forsake thee then either. If he give thee life, he will give thee meat. Keep a loose hold of the world then; contemn it if thou wouldst be a fisher of men.

Seventhly, Christ was useful to souls in his private converse, taking occasion to instruct, rebuke, &c. from such things as offered. Thus he dealt with this woman of Samaria; he took occasion from the water she was drawing, to tell her of the living water, &c. Thus being at a feast, he rebuked the Pharisees that chose the uppermost seats, and instructed them in the right way of behaviour at feasts. O my soul, follow Christ in this. Be edifying in thy private converse. When thou art at any time in company, let something that smells of heaven drop from thy lips. Where any are faulty, reprove them as prudently as thou canst; where they appear ignorant, instruct them when need requires, &c. And learn that heavenly chymistry of extracting some spiritual thing out of earthly things. To this purpose and for this end endeavour after a heavenly frame, which will, as is storied of the philosopher's stone, turn every metal into gold. When the soul is heavenly, it will even scrape jewels out of a dunghill; whatever the discourse be, it will afford some one useful thing or another. Alas! my soul, that thou

dost follow this example so little. O what a shame is it for thee to sit down in company, and rise again, and part with them, and never a word of Christ to be heard where thou art? Be ashamed of this, and remember what Christ says, Matth. x. 32, 33. "Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father,—but whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father, which is in heaven." How many times hast thou been somewhat exact in thy conversation when alone; but when in company, by the neglect of this duty, especially of rebuking, thou hast come away with loss and a troubled mind, because of thy faint-heartedness this way. Amend in this, and make thy converse more edifying, and take courage to reprove, exhort, &c. Thou knowest not what a seasonable admonition may do; the Lord may be pleased to back it with life and power.

Eighthly, Christ laid hold upon opportunities of public preaching when they offered, as is clear from the whole history of the gospel. He gave a pattern to ministers to be instant in season and out of season. O my soul, follow Christ in this: refuse not any occasion of preaching, when God calls thee to it. It is very unlike Christ's practice for preachers of the gospel to be lazy, and slight the opportunities of doing good to a people, when the Lord puts opportunities in their hand. For this end consider,

1. Besides Christ's example, that thou art nothing worth in the world, in so far as thou art lazy. What for serve we, if we are not serviceable for God?

2. It may provoke God to take away thy talent and give it to another, if thou be not active. Whatever talent the Lord hath given thee, it must be employed in his service. He gave it not thee to hide it in a napkin. Remember what became of the unprofitable servant that hid his Lord's money.

3. Thou knowest not when thy Master shall come. And blessed is that servant whom, when his Lord shall come, he shall find so doing. If Christ should come and find thee idle, when he is calling thee to work, how wilt thou be able to look him in the face? They are well that die at Christ's work. * * * * *

END OF THE SOLILOQUY.

THE

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERS

OF

TRUE BELIEVERS.

I. IN RELATION TO GOD IN CHRIST, AS THEIR REFUGE AND PORTION.

PSALM cxlii. 5.

*I cried unto thee, O Lord, I said, Thou art my refuge, and my portion, in the land of the living.**

THAT is a pertinent question to put to each of you, which was proposed to Elijah in the cave, *What dost thou here, Elijah?* 1 Kings xix. 9. Sure I am, you have weighty business to do here, whether you lay it to heart or not. Ye are in this world as in a weary land, a wilderness, a place of great danger, and of great wants: and if you have felt it so, ye are come with a design to seek a refuge, where ye may be in safety; and a portion for your souls, whence your wants may be supplied. Our text discovers where ye may find both: *I cried unto thee, O Lord, I said, Thou art my refuge, and my portion in the land of the living.*

These words shew us the course David took for relief in most straitening circumstances. He was hiding himself in a cave, that of Adullam or Engedi, for fear of Saul, by whom he was in hazard of his life. His spirit was like to sink under the burden of perplexing fears and griefs; he was in the utmost perplexity, ver. 3. *My spirit was overwhelmed within me*, says he. He was deserted by all, and as an outcast that nobody cared for, ver. 4. *I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me; refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul.* In this case he betakes himself to the Lord by prayer. And here,

1. We may notice his praying in that case, *I cried unto thee, O*

* The first sermon on this text was preached at Ettrick, August 19, 1722, immediately before the administration of the Lord's supper.

Lord. Though his case was extremely heavy, yet it did not render him incapable of praying, but quickened him to that delightful exercise, and caused him to cry to heaven out of the belly of the earth. Fears, sorrows, and perplexities on any account whatsoever, are gone too far, when they restrain prayer to the Lord: yet it may be the case of a saint, as of Asaph when he said, *I am so troubled that I cannot speak*, Psal. lxxvii. 4. Such would do well to hearken to that word, Cant. ii. 14. *O my dove,—let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice: for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely.* The best ease for a heart full of trouble and grief, is to give it a vent into the bosom of a gracious God, as appears from the title of Psal. cii. *A prayer of the afflicted, when he is overwhelmed, and poureth out his complaint before the Lord.* Hannah found it so in her comfortable experience, 1 Sam. i. 18. who having *poured out her soul before the Lord, went her way, and her countenance was no more sad.*

2. His faith in prayer, *I said, Thou art my refuge, and my portion.* He said it not only with the mouth, but also and chiefly in and with his heart (as the word is often used.) His heart and soul said it, upon the discovering of the Lord's holding forth himself in his word, the ground of faith, for a refuge and portion to the sons of men. And here three things are to be observed.

1*st*, Faith's discerning the Lord Jehovah's fulness for and suitableness to the soul's case: and this must be by the perspective of the word, illuminated by the Spirit. The psalmist saw the Lord by faith, perfectly suited to his case, in the several exigencies thereof.

(1.) He was compassed about with evils threatening to swallow him up, and in all the creation he could find no place to flee to where he might be safe: *Refuge failed me*, says he, or, *A place to flee to is perished from me.* But by faith he discerns a refuge above him, though there was none in all the world. Above me thou art a refuge; and if I can get there, I would be safe.

(2.) He was under many wants, and there was none to supply them. Though he could have got a place to flee to in the earth, where he might have been safe; yet how could he live in it? for no man cared for his soul or life, ver. 4. But faith discernes Jehovah to be a portion, that one may live on, when the world will afford him nothing. Thou art a portion; and if I can get that, I will have enough.

2*dly*, Faith's discerning the soul's liberty of access to the Lord as a refuge and a portion. This also must be by the perspective of the word, illuminated by the Spirit. The gospel-offer casts open the door of the refuge, and proclaims the portion to be free to every man that will take it, Rev. xxii. 17. which general offer is equiva-

lent to a particular one; as if the Lord should say, The refuge is open for you and you, every one of you, so that you may flee to it without fear; and the portion is free for you and you, and every one of you, and you may take and use it as your own, without fear of vitious intromission. Hence our Lord says, *He that believeth shall be saved*, Mark xvi. 16; and the apostle, *Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved*, Acts xvi. 31. And this offer the Spirit of the Lord carries home on the soul, that the man believes the offer is to him in particular, the refuge is open to him, the portion free to him, according to the word, 1 John v. 11. *This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life.*

3*dly*, Faith's appropriating of the Lord as a refuge and portion, to itself, *Thou art my refuge, and my portion.* The Lord speaks by his Spirit in his word, and says to the soul, "I am a safe refuge and a full portion, and I am willing and offer myself freely to be thy refuge and thy portion." The soul believes God, and says, "Then, Lord, thou art my refuge and my portion; even so I take thee." And thus the bargain is closed, and the soul takes possession of the refuge and portion which was offered. This is that direct acting of faith, in the cave, which the psalmist reflects upon with pleasure afterwards. I said it then.

And it shines bright in sincerity as faith unfeigned. "Away with all other refuges, as refuges of lies. Lord, I take thee for my refuge, and thou art my refuge, where I shall be in safety, as desperate as my case appears to be. And I take thee not only as my refuge, but my portion; and my portion from this moment, as well as my refuge. I design not to take the crown of Israel for my portion on earth, and thee for my portion in heaven, when that is gone from me; but thou art my portion now even in the land of the living, for my heart to live upon while in this world, as well as in the next."

As this text affords a large field of discourse, I shall only at present take notice of one doctrine from it, viz.

Doct. The soul that would have safety and satisfaction, must take the Lord Jehovah for a refuge and portion to itself, saying whatever others say, that he is its refuge and portion.

In discoursing from this doctrine, I shall a little at present consider the nature of this refuge and portion. And here I will offer a few things,

1. Concerning the refuge.
2. Concerning the portion.

First, Concerning the refuge, I offer the following particulars,

1. The Lord Christ, or God in Christ, is the refuge itself: Is. iv. 6. *There shall be a tabernacle—for a place of refuge. The Branch of the Lord*, ver. 2. *viz. the Man whose name is the Branch*, Zech. iii. 8. and vi. 12. is *the tabernacle* here spoken of, which is *for a place of refuge*, as appears by comparing John i. 14. *The Word was made flesh, and dwelt (Gr. tabernacled) among us;* and Is. xxxii. 2. *A man shall be as an hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest,—as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.* A man, who is also JEHOVAH, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS, Jer. xxiii. 6. None less than a God, the eternal God, is or could be a sufficient refuge for guilty creatures; no arms less strong than the everlasting arms could bear the weight, Deut. xxxiii. 27. Yet sinners could never have taken refuge in an absolute God, more than dry stubble could be safe in a consuming fire, Heb. xii. *ult. For our God is a consuming fire.* Wherefore, that God might be a refuge for sinners, he put himself in our nature, he took upon him our flesh. The fulness of the Godhead dwelt bodily in Christ, Col. ii. 9. Thus he became our refuge, which we might safely flee to. But a God out of Christ no sinful creature can deal with to its salvation, but to its certain destruction. For thus saith Jehovah himself, Is. xxvii. 4, 5. *Who would set the briers and thorns against me in battle? I would go through them, I would burn them together. Or let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me, and he shall make peace with me.* None that know God will dare to approach him out of Christ.

2. This refuge is by a legal destination a refuge for lost mankind, for sinners of Adam's race: 2 Cor. v. 19. *God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.* John iii. 14, 15, 16. *As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.* This destination gives men a right to flee thither for safety, which sinners of the angelic tribe have not; for as to sinners there is a man-love, though no angel-love, called *the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man*, Tit. iii. 4. Hence the call to the refuge is directed to men, Prov. viii. 4. *Unto you, O men, I call, and my voice is to the sons of men;* and to the people, Psal. lxii. 8. *Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him.* And this call is their warrant, *God is a refuge for us*, ibid. Wherefore, be what ye will, if ye be men or women, if of the lost family of Adam, stand not disputing whether ye may enter this refuge, and take possession of it for yourselves or not: your warrant to enter it is clear, and your safety upon your entering it infallibly sure.

God knows who are his, and for whom the High Priest died, and for whom the refuge was designed in the eternal decree of election. These are secrets, on the knowledge of which your warrant to enter the refuge does not depend. You must first enter, upon the warrant of the legal destination of the refuge registered in the word, whereby it is appointed for sinful men; and then ye will know what concerns you in these secrets. Remember, the cities of refuge were appointed not for Israel only, but for the stranger and sojourner among them, Numb. xxxv. 15. If a stranger and a sojourner would not believe that he might have access to the cities of refuge, because he was not an Israelite, and therefore would flee for refuge to his own country, no wonder he fell by the hand of the avenger of blood.

More particularly, I will tell you of four sorts of men, whom God in Christ is a refuge for; and I am sure each of us may find our name among them. He is a refuge,

(1.) For the oppressed: Psal. ix. 9. *God will be a refuge for the oppressed.* Are ye oppressed by sin? Do ye find it holding you down as a giant doth a weak man, so that your souls are saying, *O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* Rom. vii. 24. Are ye oppressed by Satan? Do ye find the strong and subtile adversary an overmatch for you? Are ye oppressed by the world? by the men of the world, in your goods, in your name and reputation, or on any other account are you crying out of violence and wrong? are ye oppressed by the things of the world, the cares, business, or frowns of the world? Here is a refuge for you; come in hither unto a God in Christ, saying, *O Lord, thou art my refuge:* and, *O Lord, I am oppressed, undertake for me,* Is. xxxviii. 14. And there is a promise for your safety, Psal. lxxii. 4. *He shall break in pieces the oppressor.* This promise is branched out to your several cases;—As to the oppression by sin, Micah vii. 19. *He will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.*—As to Satan, Rom. xvi. 20. *The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.*—And as to the world, John xvi. ult. *In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.*

(2.) For outcasts, Psal. cxlii. 4, 5. the text and context. Are there any among us to whom the world's face is quite changed, and the brooks of comfort in it are dried up, and they are so tossed, chased, and harassed in it, that they have forgotten their resting-place? are any of you *become a stranger unto your brethren and an alien unto your mother's children?* Psal. lxix. 8. Is it grown such a strange world, that even "your own familiar friend, in whom you trusted, which did eat of your bread, hath lifted up his heel against

you?" Psal. xli. 9. and that wherever ye turn yourselves in it, to find rest and refuge, the door is cast on your face? Here is a refuge for you; here is one open door; come in thou blessed of the Lord: Psal. cxlvii. 2. *The Lord gathereth the outcasts of Israel.* It seems the Lord minds to have you in: he is doing with you as a father with a stubborn son run away from out of his father's house, thinking to shift for himself among his friends, and not come back: the father sends peremptory word through them all, saying, "In whosesoever house my son is skulking, presently turn him out of doors, and let none of you take him in; and if he come in, give him not one night's lodging, nay, let him not heat in your house." Wherefore is all this, but just to get him back again to his father's house?

(3.) For debtors, broken men, unable to pay their debts, Is. xxv. 4. "Thou hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm." Herein David was a type of Christ; for "every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, gathered themselves unto him," 1 Sam. xxii. 2. All Adam's family is drowned in debt. Our father Adam made a bond, wherein he bound himself and his heirs to perfect obedience to the law, as the condition of life to him and all his, and that under the penalty of death in its utmost extent. This bond is the covenant of works. And when he subscribed it, he had enough to pay the round sum, and so to secure heaven and glory for him and his. But alas! by his own mismanagement he broke, and could never more pay it: so the bond lies upon the head of all his heirs, till getting into the refuge, they are discharged of it upon their pleading the Cautioner's payment, Rom. vi. 14. *Ye are not under the law, but under grace.* Whence it is evident, that those who are under grace in this refuge, are not any more under the law, or under that bond, and that they who are not in the refuge, under grace, are still under the bond, the law as the covenant of works. And know, O sinner, that thou art liable in payment both of the penalty and principal sum contained in the bond: "For it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them," Gal. iii. 10. And either of these are farther out of your reach to pay, than the buying of the richest inheritance in the world is out of the reach of a beggar in rags. And though perhaps ye know it not, there is a caption out against you, and ye know not what moment ye may be laid up in prison upon it, from whence ye can never come forth, Matth. v. 25, 26. But here is a refuge for you, into which as soon as ye enter, your debt is paid, Rom. vii. 4. "Ye are become dead to the law by the body of Christ.

(4.) For criminals liable to death by the law, Heb. vi. 18. Sinners, ye have by your crimes against the King of heaven, forfeited your life, and laid yourselves open to the stroke of justice: the avenger of blood is at your heels; and if you be seized by justice, and fall into the hands of an absolute God, you perish for ever. But here is a refuge for you, which will afford a rest to your weary souls, Matth. xi. 28. a hiding place, where ye shall be safe, Isa. xxxii. 2.

3. The gate of this refuge, through which sinners enter, is the vail of the flesh of Christ, rent, torn, and opened to let in the guilty creature unto JEHOVAH as a refuge, Heb. x. 19, 20. It is only by a crucified Christ the sinner can come unto God comfortably, John x. 9. The sinner fleeing for refuge, must fix his eyes in the first place on the wounds of our glorious Redeemer, and come by the altar unto the sanctuary, Rom. iii. 25. When Jacob had seen the ladder set on the earth, whose top reached heaven, representing Christ not only as God, but as man descending into the lower parts of the earth by his death and burial, he saith, "This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven," Gen. xxviii. 17. Without such a costly gate sinners had never had access to God as a refuge.

4. The covert in this refuge is the righteousness of Christ. Hence Christ is called, "The Lord our righteousness," Jer. xxiii. 6; and the apostle glories in that righteousness "which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith," Phil. iii. 9. The sinner getting in under this covert is safe from the reach of revenging justice, the curse of the law, and the hurt of any thing, Luke x. 19. Isa. xxvii. 3. This covert, which is ever over the head of the sinner from the moment he enters the refuge, is threefold plies.

(1.) The satisfaction of Christ's death and sufferings, 1 John ii. 2. *He is the propitiation for our sins.* Thus they are under the covert of the Mediator's blood, through which no revenging wrath can make its way, Cant. iii. 10. with Rom. viii. 1. This is imputed to the believer, who is reckoned to have suffered in Christ, even as he sinned in Adam. Hence the apostle says, *I am crucified with Christ*, Gal. ii. 20.

(2.) The righteousness of Christ's life and conversation, who obeyed the commands of the law as a public person, as well as he suffered the penalty of it in that capacity, Rom. v. 19. "As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." So that his obedience is theirs too, and all the good works that he did, for the space of thirty-three years that he lived in the world: the believer has them all in order,

to found his plea for heaven upon, Rom. viii. 4. *That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us.*

(3.) The holiness of his birth and nature, Heb. vii. 26. "For such an High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separated from sinners." This also is theirs and upon them: John xvii. 19. "For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth." Not as it were imputed to them in the point of gospel sanctification, as Antinomians say; but in point of justification, as a part of the law-demand of righteousness for life; which law requires for that end, not only satisfaction for sin, but also good works, and not only good works, but a good and holy nature, having no bias to evil, Exod. xx. 17. all of them perfect in their kind. And as Christ's satisfaction for sin is the only solid plea against the first, and the righteousness of his life the only solid plea against the second; so the holiness of his birth and nature, is the only solid plea against the last: Rom. iv. 5, 8. "To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.—Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." Hence Christ says of the spouse, *Thou art all fair, my love, there is no spot in thee,* Cant. iv. 7.

5. The several apartments in this refuge for the various cases of the refugees, are all the attributes and perfections of God the Lord JEHOVAH, Prov. xviii. 10. "The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe." And hence the sinner's refuge is said to be *in God,* Psal. lxii. 7. Every thing in God is a refuge to the man who is once under the covert. Is he in perplexing difficulties that he knows not how to be rid of? let him flee into the room or chamber of the divine wisdom. Is he under any thing quite above his ability? let him flee into the chamber of the divine power. Is he under guilt? let him flee into the chamber of divine mercy. Does the law bend up a process against him for debt already paid by his Cautioner, take him by the throat, saying, Pay what thou owest, or I will cast thee into the prison of hell? let him flee into the chamber of divine justice, 1 John i. 9. *He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.* And so in other cases.

6. The boundaries of the refuge are the everlasting covenant, Psal. xlvi. 7. *The God of Jacob is our refuge.* It is God's covenant title. The borders of the cities of refuge were to be nicely marked: for upon the outside of the line was death to the criminal, on the inside life, for death could not come over the line, Numb. xxxv. 26, 27. Sinners without the covenant, there is no refuge for you; but come within, and none can touch you there.

7. Lastly, The sinner's entering into the refuge is by faith, as in

the text, *I said, Thou art my refuge.* Of which more afterwards.

Secondly, Concerning the portion, I offer only two things.

1. The same God in Christ who is the refuge for poor sinners, is also the portion for them to live on: *Thou art my portion in the land of the living.* They are but silly refuges that men can find in the world; they may be starved out of them, and forced by want to abandon them. But God in Christ is a refuge for us: and he is a portion in the refuge; and those who take refuge in him, need never go abroad without the border of their refuge to bring in provision for themselves.

2. God in Christ is what one may live on, Psal. xvi. 5, 6. "The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance, and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot. The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage." The men of the world cannot understand this: but the experience of the saints in glory puts it beyond question; and so does the experience of the saints on earth: witness David, Psal. lxxii. 25. "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee:" and Habakkuk, chap. iii. 17, 18. "Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." One may live upon that happily, which is commensurable to all his desires, for the perfecting of his nature, and maintaining it in its perfection. And this, no creature can be to a man, but God is and will be to all who take him for their portion.

In him the man has a dwelling-place, Psal. xc. 1. raiment, Rev. iii. 18. meat and drink, John vi. 55. and all in a word, Phil. iv. 18. 2 Cor. vi. 10. And hereto belongs the sanctification of the soul, in the beginning, progress, and consummation of it, as that which is for the perfecting of the soul, 1 Cor. i. 30. So that as sure as the soul is made safe in Christ, it is sanctified in Christ, Isa. xlv. 24. "Surely, shall one say, In the Lord have I righteousness and strength."

I shall now make some practical improvement of this subject; which I shall discuss briefly in a twofold use.

Use I. Of trial. Hereby ye may know whether ye be believers or not, and will be welcome guests at the Lord's table.

1. What is your refuge? where take ye shelter, or what is your refuge from avenging justice, the curse of the law, and the wrath of God for your sins? If ye flee for refuge to your own working, doing, and suffering, your repentance and reformation, your case is bad,

But is the covert of Christ's righteousness your only refuge, and, renouncing all other pleas, do you hold by that? then God is your refuge, Psal. lxii. 6. Do you make him your refuge, and flee to him, when pursued by sin, Satan, and an evil world? Alas! most men either seek no refuge from sin, or they make themselves, their own strength, wisdom, or resolution, their refuge. But the believer makes God his refuge for all.

2. What is your portion? Many pretend to make God their refuge, but the world and their lusts are their heart's choice for a portion. But the believer takes God in Christ for a refuge and portion too, not only for a defence from evil, but for a treasure of provision to live upon even in the world. The world's good things they may take for comforts, but God alone for the portion of their souls. And therefore whatever fondness they may sometimes fall into, through temptation, for other things, they will shew God is their portion in the case of competition. Like the child, who may be fond of others that caress it, yet prefers its mother to all others.

USE II. I exhort you to take God in Christ this day for your refuge and portion.

First, O flee into this refuge. For motives, consider,

1. Ye need a refuge: for your souls are in the greatest hazard; the avenger of blood is pursuing you: and ye are in an evil world, and judgment is fast approaching on the land wherein ye live. It is high time for you to look out a place of safety.

2. There is no other safe refuge for you. Have ye not already found other refuges, where ye expected safety, fail you? and so will ye find it unto the end. Death will cast you out of them all. But if ye flee by faith into this refuge, it will never fail nor disappoint you.

This refuge is open to you. God in Christ is ready to embrace you with open arms, and afford you all manner of safety, from revenging justice, the fiery law, hell, wrath, an evil world, and sin, the worst of all enemies.

Secondly, Take God in Christ for your portion this day. For motives, consider,

1. The Lord is willing to take you for his portion. When all the world is divided into two parts, such as will believe in Christ, and such as will not; though the latter may be great and wise men in comparison of you, and ye never so little worth, he says, They shall be my portion, Deut. xxxii. 9. *For the Lord's portion is his people:* and will not you say, *Thou art my portion?*

2. There is no shadow of just competition betwixt the Lord and all other portions. Ye will get the double portion, a first-born, by taking him for your portion. He is a full, complete, satisfying por-

tion, and a lasting portion that will never decay. Now the all is divided into two parts, God himself, and the world and all that is in it, chuse you this day which shall be your portion. And remember that upon this choice your everlasting happiness or misery depends.

But one may say, How shall I take the Lord for my refuge and my portion? how shall I say, *Thou art my refuge, and my portion?*

1. Be sensible of thy need of a refuge and a portion to thy soul, which it cannot find among the creatures, as the prodigal deeply felt, Luke xv. 14. Till the vanity of created refuges and portions be discovered, and they appear refuges of lies, the soul will never take God in Christ for its refuge and portion, Jer. xvi. 19, "O Lord, my strength and my fortress, and my refuge in the day of affliction, the Gentiles shall come unto thee from the ends of the earth, and shall say, Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and things wherein there is no profit."

2. Believe God in Christ to be a safe refuge and a full portion. The soul will never come to Christ, till it be persuaded that that safety and satisfaction is to be found in him, which is to be found no where else, Luke xv. 17.

3. Believe the gospel-offer with particular application to thyself, namely, That the Lord is offered for a refuge and portion to thee. This is the report of the gospel; and he who does not believe it, makes God a liar, 1 John v. 10.

4. From a steadfast resolution of spirit to take God in Christ for thy refuge and portion, to venture to flee into the refuge and lay hold on him as thy portion, upon the warrant of the gospel-offer, as the prodigal did, *I will arise and go to my father*, &c. Luke xv. 18.

5. Renounce all other refuges and portions, and lay the whole stress of thy safety and provision, for time and eternity, upon God in Christ, saying, "Truly in vain is salvation hoped for from the hills, and from the multitude of mountains: truly in the Lord our God is the salvation of Israel," Jer. iii. 23. "God is a refuge for us," Psal. lxii. 8. Bid farewell to the refuges of lies, lift thy confidence and dependance from off all others, and fix it upon God in Christ, upon the warrant of the word, saying as Psal. lxii. 5. "My soul, wait thou only upon God: for my expectation is from him."

6. *Lastly*, Resolutely cleave to the Lord as thy refuge and portion, saying with Job, chap. xiii. 15, *Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him:* Thou art my refuge and portion, I will seek no other, I can take no other, for time and for eternity.

FAITH'S RECOGNITION OF TAKING GOD FOR A REFUGE AND PORTION, ILLUSTRATED.*

PSALM cxlii. 5.

I cried unto thee, O Lord, I said, Thou art my refuge, and my portion, in the land of the living.

LAST Lord's day I opened the nature of the refuge for poor sinners, pressed you to flee into it, and to say each of you for yourselves, Thou art my refuge, and shewed how ye should say it. I now propose another doctrine, viz.

DOCT. That those who have said to God in Christ, Thou art my refuge and portion, should recognize, reflect upon, and call to mind their so saying. Or, Those who have taken God in Christ for their refuge and portion, should recognize their so doing. *I said, Thou art my refuge and my portion.* David said this in the cave, and afterwards he comes over it again.

In handling this doctrine, I shall proceed as follows,

I. I shall shew what is imported in this recognisance of that deed or saying of the soul.

II. Why they should recognise it.

III. Apply.

1. I am to shew what is imported in this recognisance of that deed or saying of the soul; *I said it.* It imports,

1. A remembrance of the solemn transaction, Psal. ciii. 18. This is a deed never to be forgotten, but always to be kept in remembrance. It was God's quarrel with Tyre, that they remembered not the brotherly covenant with Edom, Amos i. 9. How much more if we remember not the covenant with God himself? But it fares with many in effect, as with men in other cases, they say the word, but afterwards they never mind they said it: for alas! they *remember it as waters that pass away,* which is in effect, it slips out of their mind, Job vi. 16. But, O ye who have said this, remember,

(1.) What you said. You said that God in Christ should be your refuge, that under the shade of his wings you hid yourselves, and that, renouncing all other refuges, as refuges of lies, you did betake yourselves to the covert of Christ's righteousness, and that there ye would abide for your portion; which was a formal acceptance of and laying hold on the covenant.

(2.) To whom you said it. To God in Christ speaking to you in the gospel-offer, and inviting you into the refuge. What men

* This second sermon was preached at Ettrick, August 26, 1721.

say to their superiors, they think themselves specially concerned to mind. And surely what ye have said to God, ye ought in a peculiar manner to remember, and awe your hearts with the consideration of the majesty of the party to whom ye said it, Psal. xvi. 2. "O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord." For he is not one with whom we may deal falsely.

(3.) How ye said it. Did ye not say it in your hearts, while God in Christ was held out as a refuge for you? And the language of the heart is plain language with a heart-searching God. Did not some of you say it with your mouths? and did not all communicants say it solemnly before the world, angels, and men, by their receiving the elements of bread and wine?

(4.) Upon what grounds you said it. Did you not see a necessity of a refuge for you, and a necessity of taking God in Christ for your refuge? Ye had rational grounds for it, and lasting grounds that can never fail; so that ye can never have ground to retract, nor shift about for another refuge, Jer. ii. 31.

(5.) Where ye said it. Remember the spot of ground, where ye said it in prayer, where ye said it at the communion-table, Psal. xlii. 6. The stones of the place will be witnesses of your saying it, Joshua xxiv. 27.

2. A standing to it, without regretting that we said it, remembering what is said, John vi. 66—69. "From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe, and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God." Men often repent what they have said and therefore will not own they have said it. But gracious souls will not repent their saying this, but will abide by it. If they were to make their choice a thousand times, having chosen God in Christ for their refuge and portion, they would not alter, but their first choice would be their last choice, Jer. iii. 19. "I said, thou shalt call me, my Father, and shalt not turn away from me." Many alterations may be in men's circumstances in the world, but there can never be one that will afford ground for retracting this saying.

3. An owning of the obligation of it, *I said*, and am obliged thereby to stand to it: *For I have opened my mouth unto the Lord, and I cannot go back*, Jud. xi. 35. God in Christ is yours, and ye are his by your own consent; ye are no more your own; ye have said the word, and must own that it is binding on you; and ye must beware that after vows ye make not inquiry. Whoever may pretend they

have their choice yet to make of a refuge and portion to themselves ye cannot: ye are engaged already, and yet ye are not in safety to hearken to any other proposals, more than a woman who has already signed her contract with one man.

4. A professing of it confidently without being ashamed of it: q. d. "I own it before all men, and am not ashamed of my choice." Antichrist allows some of his vassals to carry his mark in their right hand, Rev. xiii. 10. But all the followers of the Lamb have their mark on their forehead, where it will not hide, Rev. xiv. 1. The world would put the people of God to shame on the head of their refuge and portion, as if they had made a foolish bargain of it, Psal. xiv. 6. "You have shamed the counsel of the poor, because the Lord is his refuge." But sincerity will make men despise that shame, as David said, "And I will yet be more vile than thus, and will be base in mine own sight."

5. A satisfaction of heart in it: q. d. "I said it, and O but I am well pleased that ever I said it; it was the best saying I could ever say," Psal. xvi. 2, 5, 6, 7. And this is in effect to say it over again. And good reason there is for them who have sincerely said it, to be well satisfied in their refuge, and to rejoice in their portion. The reflecting upon it may afford solid delight and content of heart. Ye who have taken the Lord for your refuge, may with much satisfaction reflect on it; for ye have,

(1.) A safe refuge, Prov. xviii. 10. "The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe. Chap. xxix. 25. Whoso putteth his trust in the Lord, shall be safe." Ye may sing the 91st psalm as your own charter for safety. Whatever storms blow, no plague shall come near thy dwelling while thou dwellest there. Revenging justice can do nothing against you there: the fiery law cannot throw the fire-balls of its curses within the border of your refuge: Rom. viii. 1, "There is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." Gal. iii. 13, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." God, who without the refuge is a consuming fire to sinners, within it is refreshing, warming, enlightening fire to them. However heavy days of common calamity ye may see, ye may be very easy in your refuge, having such a covert above your head, Job v. 22. "At destruction and famine thou shalt laugh," like the child in the shipwreck, smiling at the motions of the broken board.

(2.) A well furnished refuge: *Thou art my refuge and my portion,* says David in the text. There will never be any need to leave it for want of provision, and to shift elsewhere. God in Christ is a full portion in the refuge, of which we may afterwards speak more

particularly. There is nothing the man wants and is really in need of, but he shall have it there, Psal. lxxxiv. 11. "For the Lord God is a sun and shield: The Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." What is in the refuge? There is a fulness there, yea, all fulness, Col. i. 19, *For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell.* And where all fulness is, [1.] There is not any thing wanting to make the sinner happy; there is a variety of provision, yea, all manner of provision, Cant. vii. ult. "At our gates are all manner of pleasant fruits, new and old." Rev. xxi. 7. "He that overcometh shall inherit all things." [2.] There is plenty of every thing; no exhausting of any part of the provision; nothing will ever run short there, Rev. xxii. 2, "In the midst of the street of it, and of either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits and yielded her fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations."

(3.) The only refuge where men can be safe, Psal. xviii. 31, "*For who is God save the Lord? or who is a rock save our God?* There are other refuges indeed, but then they are all refuges of lies, and they will be all swept away, and those who lodge in them left naked, and open to all ruin, Isa. xxviii. 17. "The hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding-place." All must come to your refuge or perish, Acts iv. 12. "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." So that your duty and interest both say to you in this case, Let them return unto you, but return not ye unto them.

(4.) A near-hand refuge, Jer. xxiii. 23. *Am I a God at hand, saith the Lord, and not a God afar off?* God in Christ is every-where present; so be where ye will, ye are always within a step of your refuge, to be made by faith, Rom. x. 6, 7, 8. "But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above); or Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ from the dead); but what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is the word of faith which we preach." Hence the people of God have had the benefit of their refuge, when they were cast into prisons, dungeons, banished to remote parts of the world. The cities of refuge were so situated, that some of them were on this side Jordan, and some on that side, that they might be near to flee to. In a moment thou mayst flee into thy refuge by faith. Hence faith is called a looking, Isa. xlv. 22. *Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth.*

(5.) A refuge none can stop your way to. However the child of God be blocked up, like David in the cave, however he may be hampered, none in the world can stop his way thither: *I said, Thou art my refuge.* God himself has prepared the way; and there is no stop in it for any that mind it. Hence Christ says to the spouse, "Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. For lo, the winter is past; the rain is over and gone," &c. Cant. ii. 10, 11. Enemies, may stand betwixt you and all created refuges, but nothing can hold you out of this refuge, who by faith go thither. "For, says the apostle, I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord, Rom. viii. 38, 39.

(6.) A ready refuge. The gates stand open night and day to receive the refugees, Zech. xiii. 1. "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness." None who flee thither are refused, or denied access; John vi. 37. *Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.* The father meets the prodigal son while he was yet a great way off; and no man can be more ready to enter the refuge, than the Refuge is to receive him.

(7.) A lasting refuge; a refuge for time, for all times, be they never so bad, Psal. lxii. 8. *Trust in him at all times:—God is a refuge for us.* From the beginning to this day, throughout all generations, this refuge has lasted, Psal. xc. 1. and will last a refuge for sinners to the end. And it is a refuge for eternity too, when all other refuges shall be razed, Isa. xxv. 4. "Thou hast been a refuge to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, &c. Heb. vii. 25. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."

6. A pleading the benefit of it; q. d. "I have said it, and plead the benefit of God's refugees, safety and sanctification; Lam. iii. 24. "The Lord is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him." God loves to have his people pleading their interest in him, Jer. iii. 4, "Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My Father, thou art the guide of my youth?" The saints are very pointed and peremptory in it, Psal. cxvi. 6, "Oh Lord, truly I am thy servant, I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid: thou hast loosed my bonds." And this they do over the belly of discouragements, Isa. lxiii. 16, "Doubtless thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: thou, O Lord, art

our Father, our Redeemer, thy name is from everlasting." We should hold by it, and by no means quit it, as the guilty did by the horns of the altar. Therefore saith the apostle, Heb. x. 25, "Cast not away your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward."

II. The next head is to shew why they who have taken God in Christ for their refuge and portion, should recognise their so doing. They should do it,

1. For the honour of God in Christ. It tends to the Lord's honour for his people to be often recognising and re-acknowledging their subjection to him, and their consent to the covenant, Jer. iii. 4, forecited. For it says, they remember it, stand to it, own it, profess it consistently, are satisfied in it, and plead the benefit of it. For this cause the sacrament of the supper was instituted, and is often to be celebrated, that so the covenant may be confirmed and recognised again and again.

2. To revive the impressions of it on their own souls, Psal. xvi. 2. *O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord.* We are apt to forget what we have most solemnly said unto the Lord in the covenant. Hence Moses says unto the children of Israel, Deut. iv. 23, "*Take heed unto yourselves, lest ye forget the covenant of the Lord your God which he made with you.* How soon did Peter and the rest of the disciples forget, after the first communion, what they had said unto the Lord? The hearts of the best are fickle; impressions of good are easily worn off them, and very soon too do they begin to grow weak. We have much need therefore to be putting ourselves in mind of what passed in that case, lest the heart be like the adulteress, *which forsaketh the guide of her youth, and forgetteth the covenant of her God*, Prov. ii. 17.

3. Because there is a competition in our case betwixt the Lord, and the world with the lusts thereof: and after we have said to the Lord, *Thou art my refuge and my portion*, these will set upon us to take them for a refuge and a portion. Wherefore this is necessary in that case to make a decision of the case still, and to silence the Lord's competitors, and cut off their pretences to us: even as a woman already espoused would recognise her espousals, to silence one continuing to make suit to her, Tit. ii. 12.

4. To excite ourselves to the duty of the relation constituted by that saying. If we have taken refuge under the shadow of the Lord's wings, we must be as obedient children, walking according to the law of our God, our Husband, elder Brother, and King. If we have taken him for our portion, we must live to and for him, as we live by him, Psal. ciii. 18. But we will be ready to neglect our duty, if we call not to mind the engagements to it, taken upon us.

5. *Lastly*, To strengthen us in the faith of the privileges of the relation. It will serve to confirm our trust in him for safety and satisfaction, when we remember that we have said unto the Lord, *Thou art my refuge and my portion.* It will be a means to cause us to adhere to him as such, Job xiii. 15. *Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.*

I come now to apply this doctrine to them that have said the Lord is their refuge and their portion, and to those who cannot be brought to say it,

FIRST, Let me address myself to you who have said unto the Lord, Thou art my refuge and my portion, at a communion-table or otherwise.

First, Since ye have said it, recognise, reflect upon, and call to mind your saying it.

1. Do it often; often call to mind your saying it. We find David often upon it, Psal. xvi. 2. forecited. Psal. xxxi. 14, "I said, Thou art my God." cxix. 57, "Thou art my portion, O Lord: I have said that I would keep thy words." cxl. 6, "I have said unto the Lord, thou art my God." Ye cannot remember it too often; for it is a thought that is always seasonable. It must be habitually in your mind: it must never be out of it, either virtually or expressly. For your hearts are apt to forget the Lord: and, forgetting him, and your relation and engagement to him, ye go astray.

2. Do it occasionally at some times in an explicit manner. Renew this your transaction with God, and set it again before your eyes expressly, and that on these four occasions especially.

(1.) When a temptation is before you to sin, in thought, word, or deed; as Joseph did, Gen. xxxix. 9. *How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?* Many think they are to be excused in the woful out-breakings of their corruption, because forsooth they are provoked and tempted: as if a soldier should say, he did not yield to the enemy until he attacked him. But ye are called to resist temptation, that ye may resist it, to remember that ye have said unto the Lord, *Thou art my refuge and portion.* Let that thought pass through your heart before ye yield, and it will help you to stand.

(2.) When ye find yourselves unfit or backward to duty, take this into your thoughts in a believing manner: so will ye see both what may excite you to duty, and what may encourage, strengthen, and oil the wheels of your soul: as Paul experienced, Rom. vii. 24, 25, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Here is your relation to God, and your privilege.

(3.) When ye are in danger or difficulties that ye know not how to get through; then remember, that ye have said to the Lord, *Thou art my refuge.* This is the way to compose your souls in a patient waiting for God, and comfortable expectation of relief from him; whether they be dangers of your soul, body, outward estate, reputation, &c.

(4.) When ye are under the world's frowns, things going wrong with you there, when the persons or things of the world disappoint you in your expectations from them: then remember ye have said, *Thou art my portion.* This will be of use to compose your heart under all these, since these are not, but God is your portion.

3. Do it sometimes in a solemn stated manner, taking some time by yourself alone to review what passed betwixt God and your soul in the day you said, *Thou art my refuge and portion.* Self-examination is necessary after as well as before a communion: and I must say, it is a very bad sign, when people are at no pains that way after a communion. If ye have not done it as yet, see that ye do it this night; retire yourselves by yourselves a while, and review what you said to the Lord this day eight-days; to whom, how, upon what grounds, and where ye said it. And particularly examine yourselves, whether ye said it sincerely or not, *Thou art my refuge.* If you have made God in Christ your refuge then,

(1.) Ye will have a superlative esteem of him above all persons and things, 1 Pet. ii. 7. *Unto you that believe he is precious.* The city of refuge was better to the refugee than all the land of Canaan besides, for there only could he be in safety of his life. And God in Christ will be better to the sincere soul than all persons or things else, Psal. lxxiii. 25, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee." Luke xiv. 26, "If any man come after me, and hate not his father and mother, &c. he cannot be my disciple."

(2.) Ye will have fled to him for safety from sin, as well as from wrath, Matth. i. 21, "Thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins." Ye will have made his sanctifying Spirit, as well as his justifying blood, your refuge. And because the sincere refugee flees from sin as sin, your souls will be longing to be rid of all sin, counting it as your enemy and the pursuing avenger; and the remains of sin in you, will be your soul's burden, Rom. vii. 24, forecited.

(3.) Ye will look for safety from God in Christ alone, and not from the law or your own works: *For by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified,* Gal. ii. 16. From thence will be the support of your souls. When a man is without the city of refuge, if the aven-

ger of blood pursue hot, then he quickens his pace; if he halts, then he halts, all his motions and comforts depending on his motions or haltings. But when he has got within the city, it is not so with him. Thus as to men out of Christ, the great motives to obedience are fear of punishment and hope of reward by their works, which are the great grounds of their comfort: but the soul which has made God in Christ its refuge, looks for its safety only in Christ's works and suffering, Phil. iii. 3. *rejoicing in Christ Jesus, and having no confidence in the flesh;* and so its labour is turned into a *labour of love*, Heb. vi. 10.

Secondly. Since ye have said, That God in Christ is your refuge, hold by it, and carry yourselves accordingly.

I. Abide in your refuge, John xv. 4. Cleave to God in Christ as your refuge for ever, Acts xi. 23. Your continuance there is necessary to evidence your sincerity, John viii. 31. "If ye continue in my love, then are ye my disciples indeed." Drawing back is dangerous, Heb. x. 38, "If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him." It speaks hypocrisy, 1 John i. 19, "They went out from us, but they were not of us: for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest, that they were not all of us." And,

(1.) Venture not out without the borders of your refuge, Heb. iii. 12, Take heed lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God." A man is no longer in safety than he is within the refuge, Num. xxxv. 25, 27. For without it death reigns, without it is nothing but the land of darkness and shadow of death.

(2.) Beware of betaking yourselves to any other refuges, for their is no safety in them, Acts iv. 12. forecited. Every man is sensible he needs a defence, something to trust to for safety in his straits: but all things else beside God in Christ will be found lying refuges which will not secure you, Isa. xxviii. 17. And,

[1.] Make not men your refuge. For, "Thus saith the Lord, Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord. For he shall be like the heath in the desart, and shall not see when good cometh, but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited," Jer. xvii. 5, 6. David was not one that had much experience of men's falsehood, and disappointing the expectations of those that trusted in them, Psal. cxlii. 4, "I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me; refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul. Therefore saith he, It is better to trust in the Lord, than to put confidence in man. It is

better to trust in the Lord than to put trust in princes, Psal. cxviii. 8, 9. Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth: in that very day his thoughts perish. Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God," Psal. cxlvi. 3, 4, 5. Wherefore in all cases where ye may be in hazard this way of placing confidence in men, beware of it, and place your confidence in God.

[2.] Nor make world's wealth your refuge, Prov. xviii. 11. "The rich man's wealth is his strong city, and as an high wall in his own conceit." O what safety are men apt to promise to themselves from their abundance! and yet after all it proves but a refuge of lies: Psal. lii. 6, 7, "The righteous also shall see, and fear, and shall laugh at him. Lo, this is the man that made not God his strength; but trusted in the abundance of his riches, and strengthened himself in his wickedness." Much need is there then to take heed to the advice, Psal. lxii. 10, *If riches increase, set not your heart upon them.*

[3.] Nor make your own works and duties your refuge. Paul could not trust himself under that covert, but desired to be "found in Christ, not having his own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith," Phil. iii. 9. It is natural to men, when conscience is raised on them, and begins to pursue them, to flee to their own works and doings, and to seek refuge about mount Sinai for their guilty souls, as the Jews did, who sought after righteousness, not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law, Rom. ix. 33. Your only safety is under the covert of blood.

[4.] Nor uncovenanted mercy, mercy for mere mercy's sake, as many do, who, not careful to be savingly interested in Christ, betake themselves to mercy, without betaking themselves to Christ by faith. These, justice will draw from the horns of the altar; for *without shedding of blood is no remission*, Heb. ix. 22. It is mercy through a propitiation, that is the only safe refuge for a guilty creature; for, said the publican, *God be merciful* [*propitious* Gr.] *to me a sinner*, Luke xviii. 11.

2. Improve your refuge for safety, comfort and establishment in all cases. This is the life of faith which all believers are called to as that wherein their duty and interest jointly lie, Gal. ii. 20, "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." And,

(1.) With respect to sin, improve your refuge. When ye are assaulted with temptation from the devil, the world, and the flesh,

betake yourselves to God in Christ for safety and preservation, as Paul did, Rom. vii. 24, 25, forecited. Ye are in this world as in a wilderness, where your souls' enemies are ready to attack you, and cause you to violate your fidelity to your Lord and Husband; ye should then cry out to him, that ye suffer violence, and flee into the arms of his grace, where ye may be safe. Thus did Paul, 2 Cor. xii. 9, who being harassed with a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan, besought the Lord, that it might depart from him; and received this answer, "My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness." Mens' grappling with temptation in their own strength, is the cause why so often they come foul off, Prov. xxviii. 26, *He that trusteth in his own heart, is a fool.*

(2.) With respect to the law as a covenant of works. There is no standing before it, but under this covert. Sometimes it invades the believer, and makes high demands of him for his salvation. [1.] Thou art a sinner, and justice must be satisfied for thy sin: then flee thou into thy refuge, and hide thyself in the wounds of the Redeemer; plead the satisfaction of his death and sufferings, and hold them betwixt you and the fiery law: so shall ye stop its mouth, Job xxxiii. 23, 24, "If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to show unto man his uprightness: then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom." [2.] Thou canst not have a right to heaven without working for it works perfectly good, and exactly agreeable to the law. For it is written, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them," Gal. iii. 10. Then improve your refuge, and by faith laying hold on Christ's perfect obedience to all the ten commands, plead that as your security, and so you shall be safe, Rom. v. 5, "To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." [3.] If the law yet insist and say, But thy nature is corrupt and stained; flee to thy refuge, and plead the holiness of Christ's birth and nature, by virtue of which imputed to thee, thou art without spot before the throne of God, Cant. iv. 7; Rom. iv. 8, both formerly cited. Here is your only safety in this case.

(3.) With respect to the evil day, Jer. xvii. 17. We have just ground to expect a day of trial, a day of common calamity, and this church and land, as well as each of us may lay our account with personal trials and afflictions. And we should improve our refuge in that case for our comfort and establishment.

[1.] Before it come. The prospect of trials is often very heavy, and unbelief taking a view of them, is ready to rack and torture the

heart with that, how one shall be carried through. But the man who has taken God for his refuge, should improve it, so as to establish his heart in the faith of through-bearing, come what will come, Hab. iii. 17, 18, "Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." There is good reason for it: for however great the trial be, our refuge is sufficient both against sin and danger: therefore says Paul, Phil. iv. 13, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Jer. xv. 11. "Verily it shall be well with thy remnant, verily I will cause the enemy to entreat thee well in the time of evil, and in the time of affliction."

[2.] When it is come. Whatever storms blow, believers have such a cover over their heads, as may afford safety, comfort, and establishment: for *if God be for us, who can be against us?* Rom. viii. 31. There is a kindly invitation given to all God's people, with respect to the evil day, Isa. xxvi. 20. "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast." And the voice of faith in answer thereto is, "My soul trusteth in thee: yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast," Psal. lvii. 1. It is good news, that Zion's God reigneth, whatever the time brings forth.

(4.) With respect to death. Death is of all terribles the most terrible, and is therefore called *the king of terrors*. But those who have taken God in Christ for their refuge, have what may comfort and establish them, even in that case. Even from the last enemy God it a refuge. So that,

[1.] The fear of death ought not to perplex and terrify them. David could say, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me," Psal. xxiii. 4. Death can do no harm to those whose refuge the Lord is. For,

[2.] The sting of death cannot reach them. They may sit within their refuge and sing, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Cor. xv. 55, 56, 57. The refuge was provided against sin and death in a peculiar manner, and they may expect all safety in it, under the covert of the wings of a crucified Redeemer. And it is the weakness of faith that makes them so fearful about it.

SECONDLY. Ye who cannot be brought to say unto God in Christ *Thou art my refuge and my portion*, to take God in Christ for your refuge; I would have you,

1. To reflect on the folly of this your course. And you may see it, if you consider, that,

(1.) There is no safety for you without this refuge. Ye are guilty and the avenger is the justice of God, by which ye will undoubtedly fall, if ye get not within this refuge. Ye must either be in Christ, or God will pursue you as an enemy. And, [1.] He is a just God, and ye cannot escape by flattering him, Gen. xviii. 25. *Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?* [2.] He is every where present and ye cannot flee from him, Psal. cxxxix. 7. [3.] He is omnipotent; and so ye cannot resist him and make head against him. "Who hath hardened himself against him and hath prospered?" Job ix. 4. [4.] He is eternal, and ye cannot outlive him. See 2 Thess. i. 6—9.

(2.) That however long ye delay, ye must draw to it at last, or perish. And who knows but ye may come too late?

2. I would have you instantly to repent, and turn to this refuge, Zech. ix. 12. "Turn ye to the stronghold, ye prisoners of hope." Though ye have sit many calls, and given Christ many refusals, yet there is room for your saying unto him, *Thou art my refuge, and my portion;* he allows you to take your word again, and rue upon him. Jer. xiii. 27. *O Jerusalem, wilt thou not be made clean? when shall it once be?* How peremptory were the people in their refusal, Jer. ii. 25. "Thou saidst, There is no hope. No, for I have loved strangers, and after them will I go." Yet see chap. iii. 1. "But thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again to me, saith the Lord." Christ insists upon your saying to him, *Thou art my refuge, and my portion*; gives you one offer of himself after another: why so, but because he would have you yet to be wise, and turn to him. Come, then, sinners, while yet there is room.

GOD IN CHRIST THE BELIEVER'S PORTION.*

PSALM cxlii. 5.

I cried unto thee, O Lord, I said, thou art my refuge, and my portion, in the land of the living.

HAVING considered the nature of the refuge and portion mentioned in the text, especially that of the refuge, and shewn that those who have taken God in Christ for their refuge and portion, should recognise their so doing, I now proceed to another doctrine from the words, *viz.*

DOCT. To those who have sincerely made God in Christ their refuge, the same God in Christ is their portion to live on in that refuge.

In discoursing from this doctrine, I shall,

I. Consider God in Christ as a portion to live on.

II. Shew in what respects he is the believer's portion, or the portion of those who have taken him for their refuge.

III. Confirm the doctrine,

IV. Make some practical improvement.

I. I am to consider God in Christ as a portion to live on. For understanding this, consider,

First, Man needed and doth need a portion. Portions are given to supply wants, and answer the needs of those who get them. The need is twofold.

1. By necessity of nature, from the moment of his being, he needed a portion, something without himself to live upon. Innocent Adam did not need a refuge to flee to, guilt brought on that necessity. While he kept free from sin, none could do him harm. But he needed a portion as he was a creature, and therefore was not self-sufficient, which is an incommunicable property of God, Gen. xvii. 1. *I am God all-sufficient.* God was infinitely happy in himself before there was any creature; but no creature can be happy in itself, having desires to be satisfied, that must be satisfied from another quarter.

2. By necessity of loss. God himself, without the intervention of a mediator, was man's portion at first, and the well-furnished world was but an addition to the bargain, Gen. i. 26, 27. It was never

* This discourse, consisting of more sermons than one, was delivered in September, 1722.

given him for his portion; for it was what his innocent soul could never have subsisted on. But when he gave him every herb for the support of his earthly part, he gave him himself as his God for the support of his heavenly part. But man by sin lost his portion, God turning his enemy, and all access to the enjoyment of God being stopt. Thus mankind was left in a starving condition.

Secondly, The same way that God became a refuge to which guilty sinners might have access, he became a portion to which starving sinners might have access, namely, in Christ. The former drew with it the latter.

1. None less than a God could ever be a sufficient portion to man. Indeed if a man had no nobler part than the body, the earth of which it was made, might be a sufficient portion to him, as it is to the beasts. But since he is endowed with a rational soul, which is capable of desires that all the creation cannot satisfy, and none but God himself can, it is evident, that only God himself can be a sufficient portion to man.

2. But an absolute God could never be enjoyed as a portion by a sinful creature. Justice stood in the way of it, which requires the sinner to die the death, according to the threatening, Gen. ii. 17, "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die;" and therefore forbade the enjoying of their portion, by which the sinner might live. What was the life promised in the covenant of works, but that complete happiness flowing from the full enjoyment of God in heaven, and the happiness flowing from the full enjoyment of him here? The covenant then being broken, the justice of God necessarily staved him off from this.

4. But God having clothed himself with our nature in the person of the Son, and so became a refuge to the guilty creature, he became also a portion for the starving creature, upon which it might live. As a refuge we find in him a covert from revenging wrath, and what fully answers the demands of the law on our account. Hence taking him for our refuge, and so sheltering ourselves under the shade of a crucified Redeemer, in whom dwells the fulness of the Godhead, there is nothing to hinder our enjoyment of him as our portion, Psal. xvi. 5, 10.

Thirdly, God in Christ then is a portion, legally destined for, and offered to sinners in the gospel. He is a portion for them to live on, as well as a refuge for them to flee unto, John iii. 16, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." I take up this in these three things.

1. The soul of man may live on the enjoyment of God (Lam. iii.

24.) in Christ. It needs no more to make it live happily, John vi. 57. *He that eateth me, even he shall live by me.* The prodigal, when he was minded to return to his father, was convinced of this, Luke xv. 17, "How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!" And if you ask, What is this bread? our Lord Christ answers, John vi. 51, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give, is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." And if ye ask, Where the strength of this bread lies for nourishing of the soul? it is answered, John vi. 63, "It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life, Col. ii. 9, 10. For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, who is the head of all principality and power." The enjoyment of God in Christ,

(1.) Removes the maladies of the soul, Psal. ciii.

3. *Bless the Lord, O my soul,—who healeth all thy diseases.* Sin has cast the soul into extreme disorders, has left it in a diseased condition, and the sickness is mortal, which the soul cannot miss to die of eternally, if it be not cured, John viii. 24, *If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.* It is cast into a fever of raging lusts, which cause in it many irregular and preternatural desires. And the answering of these desires does but increase the distemper of the soul. Men whose portion the world is, endeavour to satisfy them from their portion, but all in vain, Eccl. i. 8, "The eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing." Hab. ii. 5. "He is a proud man, neither keepeth at home, who enlargeth his desire as hell, and is as death, and cannot be satisfied." Neither can they be satisfied from a holy God, whose holiness is perfectly opposite to their nature. But here lies the matter:

The enjoyment of God in Christ kills these desires, and frees the soul from them, according to the measure of it, John iv. 14, "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst: but the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." Like as the feverish man's drought is slaked, according to the measure of his recovery wrought by some suitable remedy: so God in Christ being enjoyed by faith, the irregular desires or lusts of the soul die; and when God in Christ shall be perfectly enjoyed in heaven, they shall be perfectly expelled out of the soul, Heb. xii. 23. Thus mortification is the effect of the enjoyment of God in Christ: and as lusts die, the soul lives, lives happily and comfortably.

(2.) It satisfies the regular cravings of the soul, Is. lv. 2. "Hear-

ken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness." Take away the lustings, flowing from the distemper of the soul by sin, the desires of the heart are brought into a narrow compass, all centring in one thing, viz. what is really needful and useful for the soul's well-being, Luke x. *ult.* *One thing is needful.* Psal. xxvii. 4, "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple." And that is to be found in the enjoyment of God in Christ, Psal. xxvii. 4, and lxxiii. 25, forecited. Now the regular craving of the soul may be comprised in these two things.

[1.] A desire of what may perfect its nature. Every thing has a native inclination towards its own perfection: and the sinful creature being made a new creature, has a strong inclination to its own perfection, and consequently desires what may advance that. Hence we read of the lusting of the Spirit, Gal. v. 17, the groanings of the gracious soul under the remains of corruption, Rom. vii. 24. Now that which is perfecting to the renewed soul is the transformation of it into the image of God, 1 John iii. 2. For this is it by which it is brought back into the happy state it was created in at first, Gen. i. 27. And without question every thing is the more perfect, the nearer it comes to the likeness of him who is the fountain of all perfection. And therefore holiness is indeed the happiness and the life of the soul. Now the enjoyment of God in Christ answers the desire of the soul, according to the measure thereof. And in Christ there is a fulness for satisfying of it; for in him there is a fulness of the Spirit of sanctification, with light, life, strength, &c. and whatsoever is necessary for nourishing up the new creature to perfection, John i. 16. Rev. iii. 1. And through the enjoyment of God in him, the perfection of the soul is carried on, according to the degrees of the enjoyment, 2 Cor. iv. 18.

[2.] A desire of what may continue it in its perfection. This also is what every thing has a native inclination to, since nothing can desire its own destruction. And this the new creature or renewed soul is also endowed with, namely, a desire of its being for ever continued in the state of perfection once attained unto. But what portion is sufficient for such a boundless desire of the soul? Not this world surely, which will not last, but will be burnt up; but the eternal God, the everlasting Father, of infinite perfections, who is an inexhaustible fountain of perfection for ever. Therefore says the psalmist, "My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever," Psal. lxxiii. 26.

2. There is a sufficiency in God in Christ for the whole man, soul

and body too, Rom. xi. 36, "For of him, and through him, and to him are all things." He is infinite in perfections, therefore there can be nothing wanting in him, which is necessary for the good of his creature any manner of way, Job xi. 7, "Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?" Hence David says, Psal. xxxiv. 10, "They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing." So that he who would have a portion that might furnish him with all he needs, both for his soul and his body, may have it in a God in Christ. Thus God in Christ is a portion the whole man may live on.

Quest. How can that be?

Ans. 1. There is enough in God to give a man full contentment of heart in any lot whatsoever, to cause him say from inward feeling that he has enough, whatever be his wants, Phil. iv. 11, *I have learned*, says the apostle, *in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.* Hab. iii. 17, 18, formerly quoted. And that is equivalent to one's having all, and wanting nothing, 2 Cor. vi. 10. Phil. iv. 18. A man living thus in a cottage, with coarse fare and a small measure of it, lives better than a discontented king in his palace, Luke xii. 15, "For a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." God satisfies such as with marrow and fat, of which a small quantity fill so as the man desires no more, but rejoiceth in his portion.

2. All good things whatsoever, that are not formally in God, are eminently and virtually in him as in their cause, Matth. xix. 17, 18. *There is none good but one, that is God.* That is to say, As one getting a great sum of money for his portion, may live upon it; because though it is not formally meat nor clothes, he cannot eat it nor clothe himself with the metal; yet it is virtually and in effect both meat and clothes, in so far as it can purchase these things to the man, and so is equivalent to all such things, Eccl. x. 19, *Money answereth all things.* Even so one getting God in Christ for his portion may live upon him; because he can furnish him with all good things whatsoever: so having him to be theirs, they have all in effect, since he has all, 1 Cor. iii. 21, not only all for the soul, but all for the body too.

These two grounds being laid, I say there is a sufficiency in a God in Christ for all that is necessary for the whole man; so that they who have him for their portion, have in him a sufficiency for the body as well as for the soul. And,

1*st*, For their maintenance, in meat and drink. That day the man takes God for his portion, his bread is baken, his provision is secured for time as well as for eternity. That is a clause in the

disposition made to them of their portion, Psal. xxxvii. 3, *Verily thou shalt be fed.* Isa. xxxiii. 16, *Bread shall be given him, his waters shall be sure.* All living is fed by him, Psal. cxlv. 15. However poor and needy they may be, he who feeds his birds, will not neglect his babes, Psal. cxlvii. 9.

Quest. But what can a man make of that sufficiency in God as a portion for maintenance, when he has empty pantries to go to?

Ans. If he go by faith to his portion as his maintenance, he may make these four things of it,

(1.) He may get providential provision brought to him in the channel of the covenant, that is, as an accomplishment of the promise on which he relies. And if that were bare bread and water, it will be more sweet to the godly man than the most delicious meats to one whose portion God is not. So I doubt not Elijah's fare was sweeter to him, 1 Kings xvii. 6. than the fare of Baal's priests at Jezebel's table. Godly persons in straits helped to live by faith, get many sweet experiences, which they want when their lot is more plentiful. And sure I am the creature never tastes so sweet, as when it comes in answer to prayer and faith in the promise.

(2.) He may get a little to serve far, as in the case of Daniel and his companions, Dan. i. 15, whose countenances, at the end of ten days, appeared fairer, and fatter in flesh, by living on pulse and water, than all the children which did eat the portion of the king's meat. Nature may be content with little, and grace with less; whereas lust can never get enough. There is a curse that insensibly wastes the provision of some; while the small provision of others, by God's blessing comes to be like the widow's barrel of meal, and cruise of oil, 1 Kings xvii. She never had much, but yet she never wanted altogether. It is a certain truth, that *man doth not live by bread alone*, Matth. iv. 4; and that as men may eat plentifully, and not have enough, so they may be kept at very slender provision, and yet through grace have abundance.

(3.) When the streams are quite dry, he may get a draught of the fountain that will be strengthening and refreshful to his very body. Moses being in the mount with God, eat none for forty days, and missed neither meat nor drink. It is true, that was miraculous: but it tells us, that the godly man's portion is able to feed him without meat or drink. And I believe the experience of many of the saints proves, that a watering of grace to the soul is even sometimes refreshing and strengthening to the very body, agreeable to these scripture-texts, Isa. lxvi. 14. *Your heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall flourish like an herb.* Psal. xxxv. ix. 19. "My soul shall be joyful in the Lord: it shall rejoice in his salvation. All my

bones shall say, Lord, who is like unto thee, which deliverest the poor from him that is too strong for him, yea, the poor and the needy from him that spoileth him?"

(4.) He may quietly and contentedly, in the faith of the promise, hang on at the door of his storehouse, not doubting but his Father will seasonably interpose for his help and relief, after he has tried him, and thus feed on hope, Psal. xxxvii. 3. *Trust in the Lord, and do good, so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.* And this is one of those ways how the Lord's people are satisfied in days of famine, verse 19. Do not you observe, that sometimes the hungry child cries for bread, and the mother gives him a promise of it some time after, and thereupon he is easy? And may we not think a promise embraced by faith, will have a satisfying influence on a child of God?

2*dly*, For their clothing. That likewise is an appurtenance of the saint's portion, Matth. vi. 30. "If God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?" There is a lust for clothing and attire, for satisfying of which earth and seas, and even the most remote countries, Persia and the Indies, are ransacked: and yet that lust is not satisfied; still some new thing is desired. But, O the satisfaction of heart, where the man or woman lodges the key of their wardrobe in the hand of a God in Christ, believing that he will clothe them as is meet in his sight. This made the sheep skins and goat skins wherein the worthies, Heb. xi. 37. wandered about, more comfortable to them than the most gorgeous apparel could be to the persecutors.

3*dly*, For their housing or lodging, Psal. xc. 1. *Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations.* They that have God for their portion, though they were cast out of house and hold, will not want a place where they may lodge securely and comfortably. He who made a fiery furnace a comfortable lodging to the three children, can make any place sweet to his own. Jacob never lodged a night more comfortably, than when he durst not stay at his father's house for Esau, but got the vault of the heavens for the roof of his bed-chamber, the bare field for his bed, and a stone for his bolster, Gen. xxviii. That he preferred, as the house of God, to all the houses that ever his foot was in, verse 17.

4*thly*, For their provision with money. They that are lovers of it, shall never get enough of it, heap up as they will, Eccl. v. 10. Nay, it is ruining to them who seek it, use it, and value themselves upon it, as their portion, 1 Tim. vi. 10. "For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have

erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." But those whose portion God is, shall have as much of it as he sees they really need; and that is abundance, Job xxii. 25. *Thou shalt have plenty of silver.* If their portion furnish them not money, it will furnish them money-worth, what is as good and better, *Heb. silver of strength, ibid.* The people of God might be very easy on this head, if they could believe that all the riches of the world belong to him, and are at his disposal, and that infinite wisdom and love carves out their portion of them; and that therefore if their part thereof be small, it is necessary for them that it should be so, and that want is made up another way, Hag. ii. 8. 9. "The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of hosts. The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts."

Lastly, For a purchase to them. If men are for a heritage, some possession they might call their own, there is no such sure way for it as to take God in Christ for their portion. God gives bits of the earth, lairdships and lordships, &c. to some few of his children, though but few of them, 1 Cor. i. 26. The greatest part of those who are so well provided now, are those who have no more to expect at his hand. But,

(1.) Whereas worldly men have but bits of this earth, that they can call theirs; they that have God for their portion, have a right to the whole earth as their Father's ground, Matth. v. 5. *Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.* It is not the carnal worldlings that fight and worry one another for it, but the meek and quiet ones whose hearts rest in God, that shall inherit the earth. There is often a great difference betwixt the saints and others in this earth in respect of their possessions; they whom God has least kindness for, oft-times get the largest share of earth: but betwixt a believer and an unbeliever in that case there is just such a difference, as betwixt the young heir and one of his father's tenants. The tenant may be in possession of much of the land, while the young heir possesses not a furrow of it: but he has a right to it all; the tenant has no more than what he must pay a dear rent for, and may be turned out of at the term.

(2.) Whereas worldly men's property is confined to this earth, and they have no peculiar interest in the visible heavens, air, sun, moon, and stars; the children of God's property extends to these also, and they have a peculiar interest in them, as the outworks of their Father's palace, Psal. viii. 3. The visible heavens are a space of the universe, which Providence has kindly put beyond the reach

of men to impropriate: so that the beggar and the king are equally free to the air, sun, moon, &c. If it had been otherwise, no doubt the men of the world would have divided these among them too, as well as they have done the earth, waters, and seas; so that the meaner sort would have had the light of the sun, moon, &c. to have paid for to the proprietors, as well as they have their houses and farms on the earth, &c. to pay for. But blessed be God, worldly men's heritage extends not that far. Yea, but the portioners of a God in Christ have a peculiar interest there, 1 Cor. iii. 21, 22. "All things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours." Each of them may look up, and say, That is my sun and my moon, my stars, my air, purchased by the blood of my elder Brother, and disponed in the everlasting covenant by his Father to me, to give light to me, and for me to breathe in, by day and night, and discharged to wrong or hurt me, Psal. cxxi. 6. "The sun shall not smite thee by day; nor the moon by night."

(3.) Whereas worldly men have no claim at all to the highest heavens, and so have no place to go to when they shall be shaken out of the earth at the resurrection, but the pit of hell; the heirs, the portioners of God in Christ, their great interest lies there. Heaven is their own country, their own city, kingdom, and mansion-house: it is their own home, which they shall never depart from, if once they were there. It is disponed to them with their portion, and Christ as their proxy has taken possession of it for them in their name, Heb. vi. 10. *Whither the forerunner is for us entered.* Hence they are said to be settled there already, Eph. ii. 6. In one word, they enjoy all in their head, Col. ii. 9. 10.

3. Every man may have this God in Christ secured to him as his portion, in virtue of the everlasting covenant offered in the gospel. For thus the covenant is proposed to be believed, embraced, and appropriated by all to whom the gospel comes, Heb. viii. 10. "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord: I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people." A man's portion speaks a disposal of it to him by gift from the donor, and his property in it by claiming it as his own, and so accepting the gift. Thus God in Christ is a portion offered to all to whom the gospel comes, and a portion accepted by believers. I take up this in four things.

1*st*, The all which man is capable to enjoy, is divided into two great parts, God and the creature. This division was made by sin; for before it entered, man enjoyed God and the creature, the latter

as the incast to the former: but man falling off from God, chose the creature as a portion in opposition to God, Luke xv. 12, 13. "The younger said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey, into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living." He left his father, with his portion. And thus all men by nature, while the two portions are set before them, grasp the creature as their portion.

2*dly*, Man by this choice brought himself into a wretched condition. (1.) He betook himself to a portion that could never be sufficient for him, Isa. lv. 22. "Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not?" (2.) He lost all right to God as a portion any more. His name became *Lo-ammi, Not my people*, Hos. i. 9. Therefore men in their natural state are said to be *without God*, Eph. ii. 12; and if man had been ever so willing to have returned to the possession of God as his portion, by the first bargain, he could have had no access, more than the fallen angels, Gen. iii. 22, 24. Yea and it was quite beyond his power to have procured himself access to God again as his portion.

3*dly*, God in Christ hath freely made over himself as a portion to sinners, in the gospel; so that they all may, and are welcome to take possession of him as their portion again. This is Heaven's grant to poor sinners of the race of Adam, from which fallen angels are excluded, John iii. 16. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." Compare Prov. viii. 4. "Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is to the sons of men." And thus the mercies of the covenant are called *sinners' own mercies*, John ii. 8. and the living God *the Saviour of all men*, 1 Tim. iv. 10. and salvation *the common salvation*, Jude 3.

Quest. But how hath God made over himself to lost sinners of Adam's race, as a portion?

Ans. By way of free gift to be received by faith. Hence Christ is called *the gift of God*, John iv. 10. Is. ix. 6. John vi. 32; his righteousness a *gift*, Rom. v. 17. yea, and eternal life *is given*, 1 John v. 11. This is the free gift made by Heaven to Adam's family, so that they may by faith, every one of them, claim it, and take possession thereof, without fear of vitious intromission. And this is indeed the foundation of faith; for no man can warrantably take what he has no manner of right to, nor can any receive what is not first given him. There must be a giving on God's part, before their can be a receiving on our part, John iii. 27.

The purport of what is said on this head is, That there is a gift of this portion made to you and every one of you. And by this gospel it is intimated to you, 1 John v. 11. so that nothing remains to make it your own in a saving manner, but that you by faith claim it and take possession of it. Ye have a clear and solid ground on which ye may do so, whatever be your case, Rev. xxii. 17. "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." And this brings me to the

4*th* and *last* thing, *viz.* Faith claims the gift of this portion, appropriates it, and takes possession thereof; so that it becomes actually the believer's own portion in a saving manner, John i. 12. The sinner convinced of his utter poverty and want, and the insufficiency of the whole creation to satisfy the soul in the starving condition that it is therefore in, hears and believes that God in Christ hath given himself as a portion to sinners, and therefore to himself in particular, in the word of the promise of the gospel; and therefore trusts and confides in him as his portion, for happiness and satisfaction, upon the warrant of the word of grace. Thus faith takes possession, and saith as in the text, "Thou art my portion. Lam. iii. 24. The Lord is my portion, saith my soul, therefore will I hope in him. See Psal. ii. *ult.* Blessed are all they that put their trust in him. Isa. xxvi. 3, 4. Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee. Trust in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord JEHOVAH is everlasting strength." Thus the man renounceth all other portions, believes a sufficiency in God, and that that sufficiency shall be made forthcoming to him, according to the promise, and so rest in God in Christ as his portion. This is saving faith, by which the soul tākes God for its portion.

Even as if where a family is ruined and reduced to beggary, a friend of theirs should draw up a disposition, wherein he makes over to them his estate, unknown to them. And while they are going about in a starving condition, he causes intimate it to them, that they may come and claim it, and take possession of it, and so live on it. In that case, those of that family that claim it, enjoy it as their own: but if any of them will not believe the grant of the estate to be made to them, and therefore will not put in their claim to it, nor lay their weight on it; they must starve for all it, it never becomes theirs actually to any saving purpose. Adam's posterity is this family; God in Christ is the friend; the gospel promise in the Bible, is the disposition; the preaching of the gospel is the intimation; faith is the making of the claim; and unbelief is the not putting in a claim.

Thus have I shown you how God in Christ is a portion for sinners to live on. I shall,

Fourthly and *lastly*, Speak of the properties of this portion.

1. God in Christ is a suitable portion, Isa. lv. 2. "Eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness." Many have little satisfaction in the portion given them, because it is not suitable to their case: but God in Christ is a portion suited to all the necessities of poor sinners, and therefore they may rejoice in him, Isa. lxi. 7. The whole world cannot make a suitable portion for man's soul. He spake like a fool who said, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry," Luke xii. 20. The soul being a spiritual substance, carnal things can never be a suitable portion to it, as being quite unsuitable to its nature. But God is a spirit, of infinite perfections, and therefore a suitable portion for the soul.

2. The double portion. Such a portion belonged to the first-born, Deut. xxi. 17. by which we may understand that which Elisha prayed for: *I pray thee*, said he to Elijah, *let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me.* This seems to have had something typical in it: for all believers in Christ, in the language of the Holy Ghost, are *first-born*, Heb. xii. 23. denoting that to them belongs the blessing, the dominion, the priesthood, and the double portion. Now God in Christ is their portion, therefore he is the double portion. This world is but the single portion, a portion for unbelievers; whatever be theirs, God is not theirs: But they that have God for their portion, they have the good things of this life as the incast to the bargain, Matth. vi. 33. 1 Tim. iv. 8. God's dealing with saints and sinners, is like that of Abraham with his children, Gen. xxv. 5, 6. "Abraham gave all that he had unto Isaac. But unto the sons of the concubines which Abraham had, Abraham gave gifts, and sent them away." All is the believer's, Rom. viii. 17. compare Heb. i. 2.

3. A full portion, Col. i. 19. "It pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell;" compared with chap. ii. 9. "In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." There is no worldly portion that one has or can have, but there is always something wanting in it. There was a want even in paradise. The treasures and kingdoms of the greatest monarch on earth cannot furnish all things. But there is a fulness in God himself, he is *all-sufficient*, Gen. xvii. 1. Eph. i. 23. The saints in heaven are all filled by him, so that they want nothing; and sometimes he has filled saints on earth, that they have been made to cry, Hold, lest the earthen pitcher, the body, should burst with the incomes of his fulness.

4. A heart-satisfying portion, Psal. lxiii. 5, 6. "My soul shall be satisfied, says David, as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips," &c. Man's heart is a devouring depth, into which if one should cast the fulness of ten thousand worlds, it would all be swallowed up; and the heart would still be crying, *Give, give.* For the whole creation, yea all possible creations, cannot be commensurable to the desires of the soul of man; because the Creator enlarged its capacity to the enjoying of himself an infinite good, nothing less can truly satisfy or still its desires and cravings. But God himself is a portion satisfying to the soul: while he pours in of his goodness to the soul, it desires nothing beyond him, and nothing besides him, Psal. lxxiii. 25. "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee." Here is a portion, in which the restless soul comes to rest, like the hungry infant set on the breast, Isa. lxvi. 11.

5. A certain and secure portion, Matth. vi. 19, 20. "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal." No worldly portion is so; all of that kind is but moveables, which may be lost: but the saint's portion is not so, Heb. xii. 28, "a kingdom which cannot be moved." How many have had riches and wealth sometime a-day, who have been robbed and spoiled of all, having nothing left them? But none can take away this portion; for "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance," Rom. ix. 29. And this is the advantage of having God for our portion, in the tenor of the second covenant, beyond that of the first, John x. 28, 29. "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father which gave them me, is greater than all: and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand."

6. A durable portion. As there is no losing of it, so there is no wasting of it neither, John iv. 14. Many have had great portions in the world, who have got through them, having spent so prodigally that they have left themselves nothing. But this portion is infinite, so it is a well that can never be drawn dry. This is enough to bear the believer's ordinary and extraordinary charges, as the worthies, Heb. xii. experienced.

7. An everlasting portion, Psal. lxxiii. 26. Though men's portion in the world neither be taken from them, nor wasted by them; yet it will last no longer with them than the dying hour. When the breath is out, it is no more theirs; it becomes the portion of

others after them. But death takes not away the believer's portion: therefore is the phrase, "Lay up for yourselves," Matth. vi. 20. He will be the believer's portion in time and throughout eternity. And hence it follows, that he is,

8. *Lastly*, A nonsuch portion, the best of portions, the most desirable portion: no portion comparable to him, Jer. x. 15, 16. "They are vanity, and the work of errors: in the time of their visitation they shall perish. The portion of Jacob is not like them: for he is the former of all things, and Israel is the rod of his inheritance; the Lord of hosts is his name," Psal. xvii. 14, 15. And so the believer reckons all but loss and dung in comparison of a God in Christ, Phil. iii. 8. So the world's portion being put in competition with Christ and his heavy cross, the Lord's people have rejoiced in their portion in the midst of the most cruel sufferings, and would not have exchanged their portion with their persecutors' fulness and ease.

II. The next general head is to show in what respects God in Christ is the portion of his people, or the portion of those who have taken him for their refuge.

1. They have and possess him as their portion in virtue of the covenant of grace, which is the disposition they have to it, Heb. viii. 10. Being brought within the covenant, they are secured in this which is the portion of God's covenant-people, his children and heirs. Others have the offer and grant of this portion, but they are actually possessed of it.

2. They desire him above all for their portion, Psal. lxxiii. 25. often cited. They have seen the vanity and emptiness of created things for a portion, Psal. xxvii. 14. the fulness and sufficiency of God in Christ; and therefore their desires terminate in him for a portion, John xiv. 8. Psal. xxvii. 4. They desire him only, wholly and for ever. And so he is called their *desire*, Hag, ii. 7. all their desires of a portion centring in him.

3. They chuse him for their portion. When the two parts into which the all is divided, are set before them, and they are bid chuse, their souls take hold of a God in Christ, and say, *Thou art my portion;* I will take thee as my portion and inheritance before all the world, Josh. xxiv. 15. They halt not, as many, betwixt two opinions: they are determined, they are brought to a point; he is their choice.

4. They claim him as their portion, Lam. iii. 24. *Thou art my portion, saith my soul.* Their souls say with Thomas, *My Lord, and my God.* It is the proper work of faith to claim him as theirs. God insists on this, that they should claim him, Jer. iii. 4, "Wilt thou

not from this time cry unto me, My Father, thou art the guide of my youth?" He promises that they shall claim him, ver. 19. *I said, thou shalt call me, My Father.* And the Spirit of Christ in them causes them to claim him, Rom. viii. 15, "Ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. Gal. iv. 6. God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." According to the measure of their faith, so is their claim, strong or weak, clear or not clear: but wherever faith is, it doth claim God in Christ as theirs. Doubts and darkness may indeed so overcloud the believer, that he cannot perceive his claiming God in Christ as his, it is like a pulse so weak that it can hardly be felt: yea, he may be at that, that he says, he has no claim to him as his, that he dare not, cannot claim him as his God or portion: and yet bid him in that case quit his claim; he would not do it for a thousand worlds: which argues that he hath a real claim, though to him as it were imperceptible.

5. *Lastly*, They rest in him as their portion, Heb. iv. 3. *We which have believed, do enter into rest.* Their poor hungry souls have been seeking a portion to live on. While they sought among the creatures for it, they could find nothing to rest in as a portion: but a discovery of God in Christ being made to them, and they apprehending him by faith, their souls say within them now, *This is my rest.* They are like *the merchant-man, seeking goodly pearls: who when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it*, Matth. xiii. 45, 46. They see that there is a fulness in him to satisfy their souls, to answer all their needs, and supply all their wants: so they rest in him as their portion.

III. I proceed now to confirm the doctrine. It appears from,

1. The nature of God, particularly his all-sufficiency and goodness. There is enough in him for all that sinners stand in need of: so he needs not send them for their provision to another quarter. He is good, infinitely good; and therefore ready to communicate of his sufficiency to his own, Psal. cxix. 68. *Thou art good, and dost good;* and will not send them to another. And so it is indeed, Psal. lxxxiv. 11. *The Lord God is a sun and shield;* a shield for protection, and a sun for provision.

2. The nature of the covenant, which is for provision as well as protection of those who come into it. The leading promise of the covenant, Heb. viii. 10. *I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people*, imports the one as well as the other. And so both are promised together, Psal. lxxxiv. 11, just quoted. God's covenant is not like the treacherous covenant the Duke of Alva made with some, to whom he promised them their life, but afterwards starved them,

pretending he had not promised them meat too. No; *I say unto you*, says Christ, *Take no thought* (i. e. anxious or perplexing thought) *for you life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on: Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?* Matth. vi. 25. It is a full covenant wherein all is secured to believers, Rev. xxi. 7. *He that overcometh shall inherit all things.* It is a covenant of service, and masters give provision as well as protection to their servants; a marriage-covenant, and the husband, if he be able, will surely maintain his own wife.

3. The nature of faith, which is the soul's going to God in Christ for rest; and that not only for rest to the conscience, under the covert of blood as a refuge; but for rest to the heart, in an all-sufficient God as a portion, Matth. xi. 28. This last as well as the former is the errand faith goes to God in Christ upon: and doubtless it cannot come amiss, for it obtains all, that being the constant rule of the dispensation of grace, *According to thy faith be it unto thee.*

4. The honour of God requires it, Heb. xi. 16. *God is not ashamed to be called their God.* Believers go to him and trust in him for all, and it lies upon the honour of God to provide for them, as well as to protect them. Hath he said, "If any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel," 1 Tim. v. 8. and will he not see to the protection of his own family? Is it not a dishonour to any man of ability, to have his spouse or children hanging on about the hand of strangers, for something to live on? So it reflects dishonour on God, that his people hang on so about the world's door: and we may be sure they need not do it, John iv. 14.

5. The comfort and happiness of believers require it. It is not possible they can be provided otherwise with a portion on which they may live, John vi. 68. *Lord*, said Peter, *to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.* Though while they lived in their natural state, they could like the prodigal feed on husks like the swine; yet their new nature cannot now relish such entertainment. Hence proceed those breathings of the new nature in them, "O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is," Psal. lxiii. 1. And these desires are of the Lord's own kindling, and therefore he cannot but satisfy them, by being a portion to them himself. May not the whole creation say to the soul in these breathings, as 2 Kings vi. 27. *If the Lord do not help thee, whence shall I help thee?*

6. *Lastly*, The duty of believers supposes it. It is their duty to

live on a God in Christ as their portion, Isa. lv. 2. *Eat ye that which is good, nnd let your soul delight itself in fatness.* This very thing is the life of faith, which is the great thing God requires of his people. Hence Paul says, "The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God," Gal. ii. 20. Compare John vi. 27, 29. "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed. This is the work of God, that ye believe in him whom he hath sent." It is their privilege, ver. 57. *He that eateth me, even he shall live by me:* and consequently their duty to live by him. They ought to live on him, and lay all their wants upon him, Psal. lv. 22. *Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee.* Consequently he is their portion to live upon. He takes it ill at their hands, that they seek to any other for supply; this says, they are welcome to him.

I come now to the practical improvement of this comfortable subject, which I shall discuss in a threefold use, namely, of information, trial, and exhortation.

Use I. Of information. Hence we may learn,

1. The happiness of believers. They have in a God in Christ what makes them happy persons indeed. There are but two things necessary to make a guilty creature happy, namely, suitable protection and provision. The first removes evil from them, the last furnishes them with necessary good. In God the believer has both; for he is both a refuge to them, and a portion in that refuge. Wherefore we may conclude, as Psal. ii. *ult. Blessed are they that put their trust in him.*

2. The unhappiness of believers. They are poor portionless creatures, whatever they enjoy in the world; for any portion they have, is not worth the name. It is but a creature-portion, and that will be but a time-portion; it will neither satisfy, nor will it last with them. And therefore the Spirit of God speaks very diminutively of it, Prov. xxiii. 5. "Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for riches certainly make themselves wings, they fly away as an eagle towards heaven." Matth. xiii. 12. *Whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away, even that he hath.* God is not their portion, for he is not their refuge: they have not a God to live upon as their God, since they are not by faith seated under his shadow.

3. Justification and sanctification are inseparable; for to whom God is a refuge he is also a portion. Faith takes God in Christ for a refuge, and so the soul is justified, Rom. viii. 1. *There is now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.* It takes him for a portion, and so the soul is sanctified, Eph. ii. 20, 21. "Ye are built

upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord." Think not that ye shall separate what God has so closely joined. Ye that are unholy in your lives, may assure yourselves that your sins are not pardoned. The reigning power of sin in you may assure you, that it has yet its condemning power over you. If the guilt of it were taken away, the reigning power of it would be broken. Alas! how do men deceive themselves? They will be called by Christ's name; but they will eat their own bread. They will pretend to make Christ the rest of their consciences, while their hearts cannot rest in him, but in their lusts. But water as well as blood came out of Christ's pierced side: and if ye be sprinkled with the blood to the remission of your sin, ye are sprinkled with the water too, for the sanctification of your hearts and lives.

4. However, justification in the order of nature goes before sanctification. First, God is the sinner's refuge, and then he becomes his portion, Rom. iv. 5. "To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." Whosoever then would be made holy, and would attain to true evangelical repentance, which is the top-branch of true holiness, and the compend of all good works, must seek to be justified by faith in order thereunto. For till once the curse be taken off the soul in justification, how is it possible it should bring forth any good fruit? How can God become the portion of the sinner, till once he is become his refuge? A legal repentance may and doth go before the remission of sin as to the guilt of eternal wrath; but true gospel repentance follows it, and that inseparably, Luke vii. 47. *Her sins which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much.*

5. Believers are so set up with a portion, that they cannot break. Since God himself is their portion, they can never be poor; they will have enough in the worst of times, Psal. xxiii. 1, *The Lord is my shepherd*, says David, *I shall not want.* The believer's portion is not like that of the world, consisting of moveables, which may be taken from them; but it is *a kingdom which cannot be moved*, Heb. xii. 28. The Chaldeans and Sabeans took away Job's cattle, but not his God and portion; and therefore he could say after all his sad losses, *Is not my help in me?* Job vi. 13. The believer is like the landed man; though robbers take away his money, they cannot take away his land too: though a flood sweep away the crop, yet it leaves his ground still; so that he has whereon to live. Hence an eminent prophet said, "Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the

fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stall: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation," Hab. iii. 17, 18.

6. *Lastly*, God is all-sufficient. Who but one all-sufficient could be a portion to all that flee into the great refuge? How great must that portion be, which all the saints from Adam have lived, and shall live upon, to the last that shall be in the world; and that not only for time, but for eternity? They shall all be heirs-portioners, and all shall have enough. This world is but a sorry portion; one generation must go, that another may come, and enjoy it; for it cannot serve all together, as God in Christ can do.

USE II. Of trial. Hereby ye may try whether ye be within the precincts, bounds, and protection of the great Refuge, or not; that is, in effect, whether ye be in Christ, or out of Christ; whether in a state of salvation or of condemnation? - This is a point of great weight, and it nearly concerns you to know, where you are, whether ye are yet got within the liberties of the refuge, or yet without them. And I would offer some motives to press you to put this for a trial.

Mot. 1. Life and death hang upon this point, Mark xvi. 16. *He that believeth, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned.* Your eternal salvation or damnation depend upon it. All that are within the precincts of this refuge are safe; death cannot come over the line: all that are without them are in the utmost hazard of eternal destruction every moment, Psal. vii. 12. *If he turn not, he will whet his sword; he hath bent his bow, and made it ready.* There is no safety there; for it is the dominion of death, in which no man can be safe.

Mot. 2. There are several particular differences betwixt the state of them that are within, and of those that are without this refuge; and these differences are great and weighty. I will lay them before you in these five points,

1. In the matter of sin: there is no safety from it without this refuge, if you be not within this refuge, sin has all its power over you. It has a reigning power in you, so that do what ye will, ye can do nothing but sin, and cannot please God, Rom. viii. 8. *They that are in the flesh, cannot please God.* John xv. 5. *Without me ye can do nothing.* Ye may wrestle against it as ye will, but ye will never get victory over it, for that is got only within the refuge, 1 Cor. xv. 57. *But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.* Sin has a condemning power over you, it is armed with its sting against you, and keeps you under the guilt of eternal wrath, John iii. 18. *He that believeth not, is condemned already.* So it preys on you, as death on the carcase.—But if ye be within the refuge,

sin's dominion is broken unto you, Rom. vi. 14. *Sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.* And though it yet dwell in you, it shall never recover the dominion, but, like the house of Saul, grow weaker and weaker. And it cannot condemn you, more than the fire could burn the three children: for *there is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus*, Rom. viii. 1. Our Lord Christ felt the condemning power of sin as a public person, and so can never repeat its sentence on those who are in him.

2. In the matter of the law as a covenant of works. It extends its dominion over all to the very border of the refuge: so all that are within the refuge are free from it, but all that are without are under it, Rom. vi. 14. So if ye be without, ye are under the covenant of works, which exacts obedience of you every way perfect, under the pain of the curse; and whatever comes short of perfection in your obedience is rejected. So that when ye have done all you can, and the best you can: yet you and your works are all rejected of God because your works are not perfect. In the dominion ye live in, less is not accepted. But if ye be within the refuge, ye are under the covenant of grace, where obedience, yea perfect obedience is indeed required, but not under pain of the curse, which Christ already has bore away from all who are in him. But sincere obedience is accepted, and God takes it kindly off their hands, though it is not perfect, for the sake of the Mediator's perfect obedience, which always appears within the refuge.

3. In the matter of the curse. All without the refuge are under the curse, by the sentence of the law bound over to the revenging wrath of God, Gal. iii. 10. "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. Rom. iii. 19. What things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God." But all within the refuge are freed from the curse, Gal. iii. 13, *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.*

4. In respect of Satan. All without the refuge are under his power, Acts xxvi. 18. They are his captives, prisoners, servants or slaves, and members of the kingdom of darkness. But they that are within the refuge, are set free from the power of that enemy, Col. i. 13, and reign in life through Jesus Christ.

5. *Lastly*, In the matter of death. To all without the refuge death is armed with its sting; but to those that are within it, it can do them no harm, 1 Cor. xv. 57, already quoted.

Mot. 3. All of us are born without the refuge, being *children of wrath*, Eph. ii. 3. None enter within it but those who are born

again. If ye be living then in the state ye were born in, ye are without the refuge, and so in the miserable case ye have heard of.

Mot. 4. Sinners when once awakened see that there is no living without the refuge. Hence Peter's hearers, when pricked in their heart, cried out, *What shall we do?* Acts ii. 37. No man could contentedly live in that case one moment, if he saw his danger.

Mot. last. Many miss the entry into the refuge who seem to aim at it, Luke xiii. 24, and so seem to themselves and others to be in, while they really are out.

Now ye may know if the Lord be your refuge by this: If the Lord be your portion to live on, he is your refuge. If ye have taken God in Christ for your refuge, ye have also taken him for your portion to live on. And whether God in Christ be your portion or not, ye may know by these marks,

Mark 1. Ye will have a transcendent esteem of and value for him, and love of him above all. He will have the highest seat in your judgment and practical understanding, in your heart, and in your affections, Luke xiv. 26. Propriety in a thing raises the value for it. A man will have a greater value for, and liking of his own cottage, than another man's castle. Hence the world is the chief in the minds and hearts of worldly men; they love the world, and the things that are in the world, 1 John ii. 15. But God in Christ is chief with the saints. The great pleasure of the former lies in appropriating the things of the world: so the worldly man has his great pleasure in earthly *Mys* Hos. ii. 5. "She said, I will go after my lovers, that give me my bread and my water, my wool and my flax, mine oil and my drink." Dan. iv. 30. "Is not this great Babylon that I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?" The great pleasure of the latter lies in appropriating God in Christ: so they have their greatest pleasure in spiritual and heavenly *Mys*, as Psal. xviii. 2, "The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer: my God, my strength, in whom I must trust, my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.

2. Ye will be so disposed as to be satisfied in the enjoyment of God in Christ, even in the want of other things, Hab. iii. 17, 18, forecited. This is the rest of the soul in God as a portion, Psal. lxxiii. 25, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee." Men who have the world for their portion, are very easy in the want of the enjoyment of God; they reign as kings without him, and rejoice in their portion. And the saints give worldly men the peel of that, being easy in the enjoyment of God, under the want of those things that worldly men

set their hearts on, Gal. vi. 14, "God forbid, says the apostle, that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." Though alas! worldly men being altogether flesh, and the saints being spiritual but in part, the latter cannot get up to the measure of the former, to care quite as little for the world as they do for God.

3. Ye will not be content with any thing without him, Psal. lxiii. 1, "O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is." No less than a God can afford a rest to the gracious soul: nothing can fill up his room to those whose portion he is. Carnal men whose portion is the creature, take their creature-portion from them, and they cry out, *What have I more?* Jud. xviii. 24. If their worldly enjoyments go, the pillow is taken quite from under their head, and they cannot be content even with a God without them, Exod. v. 7—9. Esau says, Gen. xxv. 32. "Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birth-right do to me?" And if God go, the pillow is taken from under the saint's head, and all the world cannot make him a bed, where he can lie easy: but still he cries, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* Psal. xxii. 1.

Object. But may not a gracious soul sometimes be very easy, even when the Lord is departed from him?

Ans. It is true, it may be so, when they are spiritually asleep: but yet they are never so fast asleep, but they have some uneasiness on that head, as the spouse had, Cant. v. 2, *I sleep, but my heart waketh.* And there is still a secret discontent in the soul with all things while he is away. And they will not lie always still in that case, but will awake, and clearly show that nothing without a God can content them, Cant. iii. 1, &c.

4. He will be your chief concern, Matth. vi. 21. *Where your treasure is,* says our Lord, *there will your heart be also.* Whatever it be that a man takes for his portion, he will be mainly taken up about that. Men that have their portion in this life, the things of this life are their main business: these get their sleeping and waking thoughts: all things else must yield thereto, and what concerns their souls is dragged at the heels of those things: and is cut and carved as may best consist with the advancing of them. And men whose portion the Lord is, it is their main business to enjoy him; as David witnesseth, "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple," Psal. xxvii. 4. It is their greatest care to obtain his

favour, for Psal. xxx. 5. *In his favour is life.* And all other things must yield thereto, Phil. iii. 8. "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ."

5. It will be your great desire, and sincere endeavour, to be like him, 1 John iii. 3. Men generally look like their portion. It is known upon them, whether they have a small and poor portion, or a great and fat portion. And they that have God for their portion, will be like him in holiness, and it will be their desire and endeavour to be more and more like him, in all his imitable perfections, 2 Cor. iii. 18. God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, and gave us a copy of holiness and righteousness, love and beneficence to mankind, meekness, patience, &c. and his people will follow these.

6. It will be your great design to please him in all things, by having respect unto all his commandments, Psal. cxix. 6. She that is married takes the husband instead of all others, leaving father and mother for him; and so labours how to please her husband. And they that take God for their portion instead of all others, will be careful to please him, and walk by his direction in all things, Psal. xlv. 10. His will, will be not only the rule, but the reason of duty to them: and what is his pleasure they will not willingly baulk. He is their portion, and so their all. And so their obedience is limited.

7. *Lastly,* It will be upon his own that ye will serve him, Gal. ii. 20. *I live,* says the apostle, *yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.* Phil. iv. 13. *I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.* Hypocrites never take God for their portion; they seem to themselves to have of their own; and upon that they serve him, leaning to their own abilities, like hired servants. But the saints, convinced they have nothing of their own, live on him as their portion, depending on him for strength, throughbearing, &c. in duties, Matth. v. 3. "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

USE III. Of exhortation; and that to those who have made God in Christ their refuge, and to those who are without a saving interest in him.

First, Ye who profess to have made God in Christ your refuge, carry as becomes those who have in him a portion to live on. And,

1. Hang not on about the door of the world and the lusts thereof, for satisfaction, as those who have no other portion but what they can squeeze out of these dry and fulsome breasts, John iv. 14.

Leave the husks which the swine do eat, to those poor prodigals that are not come to their Father's house. Ye have bread enough there. That contentment which others seek in these, ye may have in God.

2. If the world smile on you, let it not have your heart, since it is not your portion, Psal. lxii. 10. "If riches increase, set not your heart upon them." Carry your heart lightly over time-enjoyments, and let it not dip in them. Though these are carnal men's good things, they are not thy good things, Luke xvi. 25. Thy portion is in thy refuge.

If the world frown, bear it with holy courage. Whatever thou lose, thou canst not lose thy portion, which is in thy refuge. Alas! it is sad to think that believers should appear in that case as if all were gone, since they never want a portion.

Secondly, Ye who want a saving interest in Christ as your refuge, seek to get God in Christ for your portion. For motives, consider,

1. Nothing less can be a sufficient portion for you. Increase your portion in the world, as ye will, ye will still be in want, while God is not your portion. But in him your souls shall find complete satisfaction.

2. Any other portion may be lost. They that have not a God to live on, may soon be at that, they shall have nothing at all to live on. But if God be your portion, ye shall never want.

3. What but a God in Christ can be a portion to you at death, at the judgment-day, and through eternity? All things will leave you at death, and you can carry nothing with you into the other world. What portion then can you have, if God is not your portion now?

5. If God be not your portion here, ye will have a dreadful portion in the other world. God will then cut you asunder, and appoint you your portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, Matth. xxiv. ult. Remember what Abraham said to the rich man, Luke xvi. 25. "Son, remember that thou in thy life-time receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented."

5. *Lastly*, God in Christ is now offering himself as a portion unto you; and ye may have this enriching portion. Your work now is to embrace the offer, and close the bargain.

(1.) Guilty creatures, take a God in Christ for your refuge; so shall ye be well provided for safety against the law, sin, death, and hell.

(2.) Poor portionless creatures, take God in Christ for your portion. Renounce all other portions, and take him for your portion for time and eternity. So shall you be provided happily from this time and for ever.

THE

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERS

OF

TRUE BELIEVERS.

II. IN RELATION TO THEIR DISPOSITION AND PRACTICE AS CITIZENS OF ZION.*

THE CITIZEN OF ZION DESCRIBED.

PSALM XV. 1.

Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill?

THIS psalm consists of a question and an answer. The former we have, ver. 1. the latter, ver 2. to the end.

In the question may be considered,

1. The party propounding it; *David*, for it is a psalm of his. He was a good man, concerned for his own soul. And therefore he proposes it for his own behoof, to impress his own soul with the necessity of his answering the character of a citizen of Zion. He was a prophet concerned for the souls of others: therefore he proposes it for their behoof, to impress men with the necessity of their answering that character.

2. The party to whom it is propounded; it is to the *Lord* himself. He is the infallible Teacher, and the sovereign Lawgiver, who has settled the constitutions of his own kingdom: from whom therefore we must learn them, that we may conform ourselves thereto.

3. The question itself, propounded in old Testament terms. The *tabernacle* was that tent which God set up among them, and where he met with his people before the building of the temple. It was a

* This subject, consisting of several sermons, was delivered at Ettrick in February and March, 1723.

moveable place; therefore one is said to *abide* or sojourn there. The *holy hill* is mount Zion, Psal. ii. 6. comprehending the hill on which the temple was built afterwards by Solomon. That was a fixed habitation, therefore one is said to *dwell* there.

There are two parts of this question; and in New-testament language they are these.

(1.) Who shall be lodgers in God's lower house on earth, whom he will own as members of his family, and of the church militant, whom he will entertain with and admit to communion with himself in ordinances. There are many who call themselves of the holy city, and of his family, who flock about his tabernacle, whom he will disown as none of his, and so are strangers to the tabarnacle-entertainment.

(2.) Who shall be dwellers in his upper house, inhabitants of heaven, and pillars in the temple of God. There are many who will never come there. O, who are they who will be taken within the gates of the holy city, while others as unclean lepers are shut out? Who are they, as if he had said, that I may strive to be one of them?

4. The order of the question; (1.) The sojourning in the lower; and then, (2.) The dwelling in the upper house: intimating that one must first abide in the tabernacle below, before he can be admitted to the holy hill above.

The doctrine natively arising from the words is as follows, *viz.*

Doct. It challengeth every one's most serious and solemn consideration, what sort of persons, sojourning with God here, shall be inhabitants of heaven hereafter.

In discoursing from this doctrine, I shall,

I. Shew what is implied in this object of our solemn and serious consideration.

II. Give the reasons of the doctrine.

III. Make some practical improvement.

1. I am to shew what is implied in this object of our solemn and serious consideration.

First, All shall not be inhabitants of heaven: some will perish, and drop out of this earth into eternal darkness.

1. All the sons of men will not be saints in heaven. There will be a great company on Christ's left hand at the great day, doomed to everlasting fire, Matth. xxv. 41. Many of Adam's family will be lost for ever, as well as there are many of the angelic tribe lost. There are vessels of iniquity now, who will be vessels of wrath for ever fitted for destruction. They may have pleasant spots of earth, and large portions of it, who will have no place in heaven.

2. Many of those who are now about the tabernacle, will be amissing in heaven. Many members of the visible church are dead and rotten members, who will be cut off, and cast over the hedge, Matth. vii. 21—23. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that doth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." Luke iii. 26, 27. "Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence you are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity." To see those fall short of heaven, who never had the tabernacle of God among them, is not strange: but many who in external privileges have been exalted to heaven, will be brought down to hell, Psal. cxxv. *ult.*

SECONDLY, They are persons of a distinguished character now, who shall be inhabitants of heaven hereafter.

1. They are not of the common gang of the world, "walking according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience," Eph. ii. 2. The course of this world is the course of the multitude, and the multitude is on the road to destruction. Hence says our Lord, "Enter ye in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." Matth. vii. 13, 14. They are nonconformists to the world, who are content to be the world's wonder, Zech. iii. 8. not daring for their souls to venture on such practices as, being contrary to the law of God, others make no bones of, 1 Pet. iv. 4.

2. They are not of the common gang of professors neither, Matth. xxv. 2—4. Many professors are foolish virgins, that will get heaven's door cast in their face. They carry as if they had found out the secret of making concord betwixt Christ and Belial, of reconciling the law to their lusts, of a broad and easy way to heaven, wherein men may carry the cloak of religion, and need not put off the old man. Those who shall be inhabitants of heaven are not so, Psal. xxiv. 3, 4. "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? and who shall stand in his holy place; He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lift up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully."

3. Much less are they such as are of a distinguished character for wickedness, worse than the ordinary gang either of the world or of professors, Psal. i. 1. "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful." There are many who distinguish themselves from others, by their loose speaking, lying, swearing, &c. their loose living in revelling, drunkenness, filthiness, injustice in their dealings, &c. These may expect a distinguished place in hell, but none in heaven if they repent not.

Now, that they are persons of a distinguished character now, who shall be inhabitants of heaven hereafter, appears,

1. None but such have a right or title to heaven, Matth. xxv. 34. "Then shall the king say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." And however men may get possessions on earth, by force, fraud, and injustice, without a just right thereto; there is no such purchase to be made of heaven, or in it. Hence the apostle says, "There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord the righteous judge shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing," 2 Tim. iv. 8. "And if a man strive for masteries, yet he is not crowned, except he strive lawfully," chap. ii. 5. How can ye think to be inhabitants of heaven, that walk like the common gang of the world? Where is your title to it? Ye will say, ye have a title by faith, ye believe in Christ. If it be so, your title cannot be denied. But it is a demand that ye will not get refuted, *Shew your faith by your works.* A man may say he has faith, who has not works, but he cannot have faith without works, James ii. 14. By faith a man gets a right to heaven, but it is holiness of heart and life that is the evidence of that right. Hence says our Lord, "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city, Rev. xxii. 14.

2. None but such are meet for it, and none come there, who are not made meet for it before they come. Hence the apostle *gives thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light,* Col. i. 12. Every one is in this world made meet for their place in the other world. God makes his chosen ones meet for heaven, and the reprobates themselves for hell, Rom. ix. 22. And none but those of a distinguished character are,

(1.) Meet for the journey to heaven. It is the hill of God, and it is not every one that is fit for going up that hill. The way to heaven lies upward, the way to hell is downward; therefore the latter is easy, and many chuse it; the former is difficult, and none

but those of a peculiar character and disposition have a heart for it. Hence the Lord says of Caleb, Numb. xiv. 24. "But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully; him will I bring into the land, whereinto he went; and his seed shall possess it."

(2.) Meet for heaven itself. It is a holy hill; and all is holy there. It is just the reverse of the unholy world, and the unholy heart: and if a man with an unrenewed nature and heart could possibly be let in there, he would think he were all wrong, and he would leave the holy God, angels, and saints, pleasures, and the place, and down again to the beloved world, where he would get company, profits, pleasures, &c. suitable to his mind. He would exchange the rivers of pleasures for the pleasures of the flesh and of the world.

THIRDLY, In this world they sojourn with God in his tabernacle, who shall be inhabitants of heaven in the world to come.

Here I shall show,

1. What that sojourning is.

2. Why those who sojourn with God in his tabernacle, shall be inhabitants of heaven in the world to come.

First, I am to shew what that sojourning with God in his tabernacle is. It imports the following things.

1. The world is no more their home; they look on themselves as pilgrims and strangers on earth, and their head is homeward toward heaven. Hence the apostle speaking of some of the Old Testament worthies, says, "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things, declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly if they had been mindful of that country, from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned: but now they desire a better country, that is an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city," Heb. xi. 13—16. They are brought out of the house of bondage, and are on their wilderness journey through the world, Cant. viii. 5; and the best conveniency they have by the way is not the tents of sin, but the tabernacle of God. There they draw water out of the wells of salvation, while going through the valley of Baca.

2. They are in a peculiar manner consecrated to God and his service, presenting their bodies living sacrifices, holy, acceptable unto God, which is their reasonable service, Rom. xii. 1. All Israel had access to the outer court of the tabernacle, but the priests only to the

tabernacle itself, as consecrated to God in a peculiar manner. While others are externally consecrated to God in baptism and the Lord's supper, they are all made *priests to God*, Rev. i. 6; they are *a royal priesthood*, 1 Pet. ii. 9. who shall be members of the general assembly of the first-born. They are made so in their conversion.

3. They are admitted to communion with God in ordinances public, private, and secret, and by tabernacle-communion with him are fitted for temple-communion with him above. Hence the Lord says, "O thou that art named the house of Jacob, is the Spirit of the Lord straitened? are these his doings? do not my words do good to him that walketh uprightly?" Micah vii. 7. "Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation," Isa. xii. 3. "If a man love me, says Christ, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him," John xiv. 23. The worshippers in the outer court only will get their eternal abode without among the dogs, sorcerers, &c.: but they that shall be inhabitants of heaven, come farther in even into the tabernacle itself: their souls are fed at his table, they find the smell of his garments as of myrrh, aloes, and cassia; and if they miss it at any time, it is the grief of their souls, and they are never at rest till they recover it again.

Secondly, I am to shew, why it is that those who in this world sojourn with God in his tabernacle, shall be inhabitants of heaven in the world to come.

1. They are born from above there. It is the waters of the sanctuary that the Spirit moves for the regeneration of those who are born of the Spirit. The word is the seed whereof the new creature is formed, 1 Pet. i. 23. Where God has a design of love to a people, he sets up his tabernacle among them, and gives his presence with ordinances for their conviction and conversion. "And so of Zion it shall be said, This man and that man was born in her," Psal. lxxxvii. 5. And so it is natural for them to breathe in that air.

2. They are made meet for heaven there, Eph. iv. 11, 12. They are nourished there unto eternal life; though those who remain dead in their sins receive nothing from ordinances but food to their lusts, whereby they grow worse and worse; those that are born for heaven, are nursed up for it in ordinances. There the bride the Lamb's wife makes herself ready for the consummation of the marriage; there she gets the pledges of the Lord's love, his love-visits and love-tokens, till she be brought home; and there the travellers are refreshed for their journey, Cant. iv. 6.

3. From thence are they transported to heaven, as the Israelites

from the wilderness to Canaan. The tabernacle is the nursery of grace, whence the trees of righteousness are transplanted into the garden of glory. It is the lower room of the house of God, from whence at death they are brought up to the higher rooms and mansions. And whoso sojourn not with God in the tabernacle below, shall never dwell with him in heaven.

II. The next general head is to assign the reasons of the doctrine, or why every one should seriously and solemnly consider what sort of persons, sojourning with God here, shall be inhabitants of heaven hereafter.

1. Because there is a heaven and hell, and every one must land in the one or the other at length. Sure the very being of a heaven and hell, being made known to us in the world, leaves men without excuse for the careless unthinking life they lead. Our being concerned in them challenges our consideration, since we are not as the beasts which being dead are done: and the weight and importance of them to us challenges the most solemn and serious consideration.

2. Because the laws of heaven admit only such and such persons as are so and so qualified into it, and adjudge others to be excluded for ever from it, John iii. 3. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Heb. xii. 14. "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." Psal. xxiv. 3, 4. forecited. And therefore the apostle tells us, that "if we live after the flesh, we shall die; but if we through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, we shall live," Rom. viii. 14. See Rev. xxi. *ult.* "There shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life." This is a good reason for our most serious consideration of the matter.

3. Because none who are capable of consideration, will ever see heaven without it. The work of grace begins there, Lam. iii. 40. "Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord." People may go rambling through the world at all adventures, they may go dreaming through it without serious thoughts of eternity, and land in the pit: but none will get to heaven either of these ways.

4. *Lastly*, Because if we miss of heaven, we are ruined eternally. Eternal salvation and damnation lie at stake: and if these cannot obtain solemn serious thoughts of us, our case is very desperate.

I come now to the application of this subject. And I exhort all of you solemnly, and seriously to consider, what sort of persons shall be inhabitants of heaven. Take this matter to heart, and bestow some thoughts upon it. And,

1. Consider of it solemnly, fixedly, and deliberately: *Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Consider your ways*, Hag. i. 5. You consider of other things deliberately and fixedly; why will you allow your soul-concerns only some passing thoughts by the by?

2. Consider of it with application to yourselves, Job v. *ult.* "Lo this, we have searched it, so it is; hear it, and know thou it for thy good. Prov. ix. 12. "If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself." Do this, that so you may see whether you yourselves be of that sort, that are in the road to heaven, or not.

3. Consider of it practically, that you may set yourselves to thrust in among those that so run as they may obtain, so strive as they may enter, and use such violence as they may take it by force.

4. *Lastly*, Consider of it divinely, as sifting your souls before the Lord to understand it of himself by his word. If you take the verdict of the world, or of your own hearts in the matter, ye will deceive yourselves; for so many are thought to get to heaven, that will not be found there. For motives to press this, consider,

Mot. 1. Heaven is not plenished but with chosen people, 2 Cor. vi. 17, 18. "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." Hell receives all comers, but many are sent off from the gates of heaven, and refused access. Hence says our Lord, Luke xiii. 25. "When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence you are." None can come to heaven, but,

1. Sealed ones, such as God has marked for himself, 2 Tim. ii. 19. "The foundation of God standeth sure, having his seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his." They are sealed in the hidden man of the heart, with the privy seal of the Spirit, Eph. i. 13.—*Ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise.* God's own image is stamped on them, in knowledge, righteousness and holiness. In the day of their conversion, the Lord puts his seal on them, and says, "They shall be mine in the day that I make up my jewels." They are sealed in the forehead, Rev. vii. 3. and xiv. 1. They look like him in the outward man, and walk as he walked, labouring to follow him, John x. 27.

2. Separated ones, separated from the world lying in wickedness, 2 Cor. vi. 17. forecited. They are separated from among the rest in this life, by the work of God on their souls, convincing, illuminating, and renewing them, and bringing them away to Christ. Grace

selects them out now from among the rest of mankind, 1 Cor. vi. 11. "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. Eph. ii. 2. In time past ye walked according to the course of this world," &c. They will be separated after this life, Matth. xxv. 32. "He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats;" and that will be a cleanly separation, not only in respect of manner of life, but of place.

Mot. 2. The most part will be found refuse, Matth. xxii. 14. "For many are called, but few are chosen." Christ's flock is but a very little flock, in comparison of the devil's drove, Luke xii. 32. The former are few, but the latter many, Matth. vii. 13, 14. The gospel-net has about it, the bad to be cast away, as well as the good to be gathered into vessels, Matth. xiii. 47. And since the most part will be cast out, should not each of us be saying, *Master, is it I?*

Mot. 3. Consider it is not easy to get to heaven, Matth. vii. 14. "Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. Luke xiii. 24. Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many will seek to enter in, and shall not be able." It is a business of the greatest difficulty to get up the holy hill. Many have seemed to have been set fair on the way to it, who have miserably fallen short. The Israelites in the wilderness were an emblem of this, Heb. iv. 1. Nay, they that do get there, have a great pinch in getting forward, 1 Pet. iv. 18. *The righteous are scarcely saved.* There is all reason for the utmost diligence and circumspection, according to the apostle's exhortation, Phil. ii. 12. *Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.* Our work is great, our strength small, our enemies are many, and their opposition is great: these require striving, wrestling, fighting, using violence, &c.

Lastly, It is not a matter to be careless and indifferent about, whether we shall get there or no. There are two things about it, that may move us to the deepest concern. (1.) The greatness of the happiness or misery that is before us. No tongue can express, nay nor heart conceive, the happiness of heaven, and the misery in hell. The one is shadowed out to us by the best things here, the other by the worst; but as heaven is better than the best here, hell is worse than the worst. (2.) The eternity of that happiness or misery. That is it that accents the joys and praises in heaven, and the wo and shriekings of the damned. Happiness without end, misery without end, are happiness and misery in perfection.

What may help you in this inquiry, as to your own state, is the

matter of communion with God here in his tabernacle of ordinances. Of which you may observe the three following things.

1. That is our essay-piece for heaven: they whom God admits to communion with him in ordinances, he will never debar from communion with him in heaven: and they that never get communion with him in the lower house, being capable of it, will never get it in heaven.

2. The same kind of qualifications are necessary for the one as for the other. The answer to both questions is one.

3. *Lastly*, Wherefore just as you were living in this world under ordinances, so may you expect your lot in the other world.

Let these things move you therefore seriously to think on this important matter, and the Lord give you understanding in all things.

THE CITIZEN OF ZION AN UPRIGHT WALKER.

PSALM XV. 2.

He that walketh uprightly.—

THIS is the first character of one that shall be an inhabitant of heaven. It is taken from his *walk*, that is, his habitual and ordinary course of life. Men's walk in this world is the sign of the place and state they are making to in another world. His walk is *upright;* he is upright in heart and life; or perfect and entire, namely, in the way of gospel perfection.

The text affords this doctrine.

DOCT. It is such as walk uprightly now, that shall dwell in heaven hereafter.

In handling this doctrine, I shall,

I. Unfold this character of walking uprightly.

II. Confirm the point, that such as walk uprightly now, shall dwell in heaven hereafter.

III. Apply the subject.

I. I shall unfold this character. He that shall dwell in heaven hereafter, walks uprightly now. And he that walks uprightly,

1. Is sincere in the frame and disposition of his heart. Hence prays the Psalmist, "Do good, O Lord, unto those that be good, and to them that are upright in their hearts," Psal. cxxv. 4. There cannot be uprightness of life without uprightness of heart. If the cripple is made to go straight, his legs must have a new set; and if men be brought to walk uprightly, their hearts must get a new set

by converting grace. An unsound heart will certainly make an unholy life, agreeable to that, Psal. lxxviii. 37, "Their heart was not right with God, neither were they stedfast in his covenant." All the religion of an unregenerate man is but hypocrisy, hateful to God, and unprofitable to himself. God made man upright; and he lost his uprightness. When God new-makes him, he makes him upright again; gives his heart a set and bent towards God and holiness. So that the choice and desire of his soul is conformity to the will of God in all things.

2. He walks entirely in the interests of religion. This is the walk of the man that is within the covenant, Gen. xvii. 1. *Walk before me, and be thou perfect.* It is the same word in the text. He is evangelically perfect in parts, though not in degrees. The apostle explains it, Jam. i. 4. "Let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." His religion consists of *holiness and righteousness*, Luke i. 74. He is conscientious and tender in his duty to God, and to his neighbour. Try him in the matters of piety, he is in the interests of religion there; try him in the matters of morality, he is in the same interests there: for he walks entirely and perfectly. Vessels fitted for destruction, some of them chuse the one half of religion, making painted hypocrites; others the other half, making mere moralists; others cast off all show of piety and morality too, making practical Atheists. The vessels fitted for glory, chuse, embrace, and walk in the whole of religion, piety, and morality.

3. He walks uniformly, his walk and religion is of a piece, Col. iv. 12.—"that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God." It was a piece of the Baptist's character, that he was consistent with himself, not here and there according to the blowing of the wind, Luke vii. 24. Men may hide and discover their art as they please: but nature will out. They whose religion is artificial, are never uniform in it; there are always some things wherein they have no use for it, but lay it aside as what would mar the course of their corrupt nature. Hence many will be flaming hot in some opinion of religion, and key-cold in the duties of love to their neighbour: in their personal walk something like Christians, but in their relative duties divested of conscience towards God; in the matters of God seeming to be somewhat, but in their dealings with men stark naught. But religion is made natural in some sort to the vessel of glory, namely, in respect of their new nature, and being natural will be of a piece.

4. He walks in the way of known duty universally, like Zacharias and Elizabeth, whose character is, that they "walked in all the

commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless," Luke i. 6. Wheresoever he perceives God to call him, he follows, and so follows the Lord fully; not sticking at, or willingly failing in any commanded duty. Such are they who are fitted for the upper Canaan, Numb. xiv. 24. It was David's character in opposition to Saul, that he would be universal in his obedience, Acts xiii. 22, "I have found David,—a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all mine own will." And Saul lost the kingdom, but it was established for ever. And it is always the characters of the vessels fitted for destruction, whatever their attainments be, *One thing thou lackest*, Matth. x. 21. Hence,

(1.) He that walketh uprightly, will not walk on in gross pollutions of the outward man: that cannot be universal obedience that has such a seen gross defect. Psal. xxiv. 3, 4, "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? and who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands and a pure heart; who hath not lift up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully." Psal. cxix. 1. "Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord." The upright want not their spots, sins of daily infirmity: but a course of wallowing in the mire of drunkenness, sensuality, filthiness, swearing, lying, &c. I doubt if that be found the spot of God's people, 1 Cor. vi. 11. *And such were some of you*, says Paul to the Corinthians, that is fornicators, &c. verse 9, 10. *but ye are washed, &c.* Gal. v. 19, "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these, Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness," &c.

(2.) He that walketh uprightly, will not allow himself in any known sin whatsoever, seen or unseen to the world. Hence David says, "I was upright before him: and I kept myself from mine iniquity," Psal. xviii. 23. Such a bias of the heart and way as leads to the indulgence of any sin, speaks a heart parted between the Lord and lusts. The upright man is at odds with sin as sin, and therefore with all that is known to be sin.

5. He walks as under the eye of God. Hence said the Lord to Abraham, *Walk before me*, Gen. xvii. 1. And says David, *I have set the Lord always before me*, Psal. xvi. 8. Knowing him to be his witness in all things, and believing his omniscience with application, he studies to approve himself unto God. "Our rejoicing is this, says the apostle, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world," 2 Cor. i. 12. There is a spice of Atheism in hypocrisy. The careless sinner forgets God, and minds not that the eye of God is upon him: the presumptuous sinner, if he can carry the matter securely as to the world's part,

stands not on the Lord's knowledge of his crime, Psal. xxxvi. 1. "The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, that there is no fear of God before his eyes." But the upright man deals with God, as if the eyes of all men were on him; and with men, as knowing that the eye of God is upon him. And his main care is to approve himself to God, whether the world approve or condemn him.

6. He walks singly, 2 Cor. i. 12, above cited. The upright man is opposite to the double minded man, who in the language of the Holy Ghost hath *a heart and a heart*, Psal. xii. 2, that is a double heart. This singleness was a bright part of the character of the primitive Christians, of whom it is said, Acts ii. 46, that, "they did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart;" but it is a rare character with us. The upright man walks singly,

(1.) In opposition to deceitfulness, Col. iii. 22. He dare not deal deceitfully with God, like those who with the mouth showed much love, but their hearts went after their covetousness. Hence the upright man is content that God would search and sift him, as desiring to be open before him: Psal. cxxxix. 23, 24. "Search me, O God, says David, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts. And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." He abhors deceitful men, as knowing it is an abomination to the Lord. He dares not use the by-ways and tricks that others stand not upon; but deals singly towards God and man.

(2.) In opposition to selfishness, Eph. vi. 5. They will labour to be single in their aims and designs, for the honour of God in the chief place, and their own and their neighbour's good in the next. Selfishness is a devouring deep that swallows up all due concern for the honour of God, and the good of others; and sacrifices all to one's own interest: so that self is all that such seek in their religious performances, and worldly business. Where it predominates, there is no room for uprightness.

7. *Lastly*, He walks constantly in the paths of uprightness, John viii. 31, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed." He walketh, which denotes a continued action; he perseveres in the Lord's way; uprightness is his constant course in the whole of his life. A good man may do an ill thing, and an ill man may do a good thing: but it is the habitual course of a man's life that denominates him a good or ill man. For men to take their religion by fits and starts, and now and then to make conscience of their duty to God and to man: and anon to shake all loose again, and walk like men of Belial without yoke: that is not the upright walking that is the character of those who shall be inhabitants of heaven. Remember that saying of Christ's, "He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved," Matth. xxiv. 13.

II. I proceed to confirm the doctrine, that it is such as walk uprightly now, who shall dwell in heaven hereafter. In order to this, consider,

1. Heaven is the land of uprightness, Psal. cxliii. 10. All are upright there, God, angels, and men. All liars or dissemblers with God and men, are excluded from heaven, and declared to be such as shall have their portion in hell, Matth. xxiv. ult. Rev. xxii. 15. It is the upright only that will dwell in heaven, Psal. cxl. ult. "The upright shall dwell in thy presence."

2. The new birth, which is from heaven, and makes men meet for heaven, frames them to an upright walk. No person gets there, but such as are born again: for, says our Lord, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God," John iii. 3. None are born again, but thereby they get a new heart, whereby they get a new set of heart, whereby they are made upright in heart, Psal. xxxvi. 10. And an upright heart will certainly shew itself in one's walk; 2 Cor v. 17. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away, behold, all things are new." Therefore a pure heart and clean hands are joined together, Psal. xxiv. 4.

3. An upright walk is the saint's walk, in which they make forward to the kingdom. Hence Solomon says, "Thou hast showed unto thy servant David my father great mercy, according as he walked before thee in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with thee," 1 Kings iii. 6. And no man can expect on good grounds to walk in white in heaven, but he who walks in uprightness here. Hence Christ says to the church of Sardis, "Thou hast a few names even in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white," Rev. iii. 4. The contrary way is the way of the wicked, and leads to darkness, "Whose ways are crooked, and they froward in their paths," Prov. ii. 15.

4. *Lastly*, The Lord himself hath plainly determined in his word, that upright walkers and they only shall be saved, Prov. xxviii. 18. *Whoso walketh uprightly, shall be saved.* If the blood of Christ hath touched a man's conscience, and the Spirit of Christ sanctifieth his soul, that man will walk uprightly. As for others, they have no share of these; and however they may carry it a while, they will be ruined in a moment.

I come now to the application of this subject, which I shall discuss in an use of conviction and an use of exhortation.

USE I. for conviction. This may serve to convince us, that there are few of this generation that will dwell in heaven, if they turn not over a new leaf, and fall on a way they are not acquainted with

yet, *viz.* the way of uprightness. Well may we take up Micah's lamentation over the men of these dregs of time we live in, Micah vii. 1.—4. "Wo is me, for I am as when they have gathered the summer-fruits, as the grape-gleanings of the vintage: there is no cluster to eat: my soul desireth the first ripe fruit. The good man is perished out of the earth: and there is none upright among men: they all lie in wait for blood: they hunt every man his brother with a net. That they may do evil with both hands earnestly, the prince asketh, and the judge asketh for a reward: and the great man he uttereth his mischievous desire: so they wrapt it up. The best of them is as a brier: the most upright is sharper than a thorn-hedge: the day of thy watchmen, and thy visitation cometh; now shall be their perplexity." But instead of uprightness, there is much double dealing with God and with men. I offer a few of many glaring signs and evidences of want of uprightness.

Sign 1. Men keeping still some beloved lust or other, that all the checks they get for it, from the word, their consciences, or providence, cannot make them part with. They never deal uprightly with God, but still like Ananias and Sapphira keep back a part; quite contrary to the practice of the holy Psalmist, who says, "I was upright before him: and I kept myself from mine iniquity," Psal. xviii. 23.

Sign 2. Having more regard to the eye of men, than to the eye of the all-seeing God. Their credit has more weight with them than their conscience; and if they can please men, they little regard whether they please God or not, Gal. i. 10. Hence if they can carry their wickedness secretly to the world, they regard no more than if God were closed up in heaven.

Sign 3. Impatience of reproof, a sad sign of a heart not upright with God. As a man that desires to keep a clean face, will bear with one that tells him of a spot upon it; so an upright man will take with warnings, admonitions, and reproofs, Psal. cxli. 5. "Let the righteous smite me, it shall be a kindness; and let him reprove me, it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head: for yet my prayer also shall be in their calamities." And alas! there are few this day of that sort. Men love their sins, at least their credit, better than to bear with having it told them that they have done an ill thing.

Sign 4. Not labouring to approve one's self to God in one's dealings with men, in matters of the world, Eph. vi. 5, 6; 2 Cor. i. 12. An upright man, in worldly matters, will look on God as his party, as well as his neighbour. He will deal in these things, as knowing that God is his witness, and will be his judge. But alas! most men

have no eye to God but in their religious duties, which shews that they are not upright with God there neither.

Sign 5. The wearing out of the sense of the binding force of that rule from off the spirits of men, Matth. vii. 12. "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them." This is a rule of practice, which the very light of nature teacheth, as the bond of society, confirmed to us by divine revelation; but so little regarded in our day, as if men had renounced their reason, as well as their religion, in favour of their own selfish ends. Hence, when there is occasion of advantage offering to many, there is no more considered by them, but if it be for their own profit; no more consideration of their neighbours, than if they alone were in the world, or at least that they may very well build up the interest of their dear self on the ruins of others.

Sign 6. The abounding of fraud, deceit, and violence among men. Religion in the power of it is much worn out from among the generation, and moral honesty is dying out apace. The fear of God is cast off by the most part, and an upright regard to men is rare to be found. It was so with the Jews before the Babylonish captivity, Jer. ix. 4, 5, 9. "Take ye heed every one of his neighbour, and trust ye not in any brother: for every brother will utterly supplant, and every neighbour will walk with slanders. And they will deceive every one his neighbour, and will not speak the truth: they have taught their tongue to speak lies, and weary themselves to commit iniquity. Shall I not visit them for these things? saith the Lord: shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?" It was so with the old world before the deluge came on, Gen. vi. 4, 11. "There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them; the same became mighty men, which were of old, men of renown. The earth also was corrupt before God; and the earth was filled with violence." It is so with us at this day; and there is no ground to doubt but it will bring a heavy stroke on the generation.

Use II. of exhortation. As ever ye would dwell in heaven, walk uprightly on this earth. I shall enforce this exhortation with a few motives.

Mot. 1. They who walk otherwise declare themselves strangers to Christ, without Christ, without hope, and without God in the world. They have no saving interest in Christ who do not love him, 1 Cor. xvi. 22. "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema, Maran-atha." It is the upright only that love him, Cant. i. 4. They only are accounted to love him that are upright in their

walk, John xiv. 15. *If ye love me, keep my commandments.* 1 John v. 3. *This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments.* Hence upright walking is declared to be the evidence of one's right and title to heaven, Rev. xxii. 14. "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."

Mot. 2. God hates hypocritical and deceitful men, and excludes them from communion with him here and hereafter, Psal. v. 5, 6. "The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity. Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing." God is light, which sets every thing in its true colours. As darkness then is contrary to light, so are they to the nature and will of God, and darkness will be their portion, Matth. xxiv. *ult.* "He shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Mot. 3. The cheat falls heaviest on the man himself who does not walk uprightly. Men deal deceitfully with God; but can they deceive him, can they blind his all-seeing eye? No: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap," Gal. vi. 7. They deal deceitfully with men, and they may deceive them indeed: but where is the gain, when perhaps they procure a good opinion of themselves from others, which they do not deserve; but in the mean time they bring double guilt on their own souls, both doing evil, and pretending the contrary; and so expose themselves to God's wrath both as evil-doers and as dissemblers.

Mot. 4. The trade of deceitful dealing and dissembling either with God or man, will not last. All the hypocrisy and deceit of the world will be exposed to open view ere long, when Christ shall set his throne for judgment. "There is nothing covered, (says he,) that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known, Matth. x. 26. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil," Eccl. xii. *ult.* And there will be no place for deceit any more. None will pretend to be what he is not in hell; and there will be no place for overreaching others there.

Mot. 5. There is nothing in the world worth going off the way of uprightness for, Isa. xxxiii. 15. For whatever is to be had that way, is had with God's displeasure, and instead of a rod it becomes a serpent, Eccl. x. 8. "He that diggeth a pit, shall fall into it; and whoso breaketh an hedge, a serpent shall bite him." And however men fare according to their wish in such a way, it is a dear reckoning that comes in at the end. It is a way to cut men's days, Psal.

lv. *ult.* "Bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days:" and a fair way to ruin them for another world, Jer. xvii. 11. "He that getteth riches, and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end shall be a fool."

Mot. last, Consider the excellency of uprightness and walking uprightly.

1. It is very pleasing and acceptable in the sight of God, Psal. xi. 7. "The righteous Lord loveth righteousness, his countenance doth behold the upright." It is his own image, and he cannot but love it. When he made man like himself, he made him upright. Job was a nonsuch man in God's account, and he was an upright man, Job i. 8. See how Christ commends Nathanael, *Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile*, John i. 47.

2. Though there be many weaknesses hanging about a man, yet, if what he does, he do uprightly, that will not mar the acceptance of his work with God through Christ, Cant. v. 1. Gold is precious, though it be among much dross; and our gracious God knows how to discern betwixt and separate the dross from the gold, 1 Kings xv. 14, "The high places were not removed: nevertheless, Asa his heart was perfect with the Lord all his days."

3. It is the great distinguishing character betwixt good and bad men, Christ's sheep and the devil's goats, whether hypocrites or profane, Psal. cxxv. 4, 5, "Do good, O Lord, unto those that be good, and to them that are upright in their hearts. As for such as turn aside unto their crooked ways, the Lord shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity: but peace shall be upon Israel."

4. It is a great preservative against apostasy, 1 John ii. 19, "They went out from us, but they were not of us: for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest, that they were not all of us. Prov. xiii. 6, Righteousness keepeth him that is upright in the way." It is the want of it, that makes so many apostates, in an ensnaring world, wherein they that will be led off the way, will not want suitable temptations.

5. It is a notable comfort in the worst of times, that will last when all other comforts are taken from us, 2 Cor. i. 12, forecited. Conscience of uprightness is a feast indeed.

6. They are entitled to protection from the evil day in a special manner, whether God takes them away ere it come, Isa. lvii. 2, or they be sheltered when it comes, as Noah was, Gen. vi. 9.

7. *Lastly*, Their end will be peace, Psal. xxxvii. 37, "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace." A blessing follows theirs after they are dead and gone, Psal. cxii. 2, "The generation of the upright shall be blessed."

THE CITIZEN OF ZION A WORKER OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.

PSALM XV. 2.

—And worketh Righteousness.—

HERE is the second character of an inhabitant of heaven. He is a worker, not one that standeth idle in the market-place; but a doer of good works: he worketh righteousness towards God and man, making it his business to give both to God and man their due. For the words are general, taking in whatsoever is just and righteous, whether owing to God or man.

The doctrine natively arising from the text is as follows, *viz.*

DOCT. It is he that worketh righteousness now in this world, that shall dwell in heaven hereafter.

In prosecuting this doctrine, I shall,

I. Unfold this character of one that shall dwell in heaven, *He worketh righteousness.*

II. Confirm the doctrine.

III. Apply.

I. I am to unfold this character of one that shall dwell in heaven, *He worketh righteousness.* I take it up in three parts.

First, He is a believer in Christ, and righteous by faith. This is a necessary and chief branch of this character, according to our Lord's own testimony, John vi. 29, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." He that does not work this work, works no righteousness at all. The imputed righteousness of a Redeemer is the meat abiding unto everlasting life, which our Lord calls us to work, that is, to get to ourselves by faith, ver. 27. *Gr.* To be a worker of righteousness supposes one to be in the first place a believer, one laying hold on and embracing Christ for righteousness, and living by faith in him. This appears,

1. A man must first be righteous, before he can work righteousness of life, 1 John iii. 7, "He that doth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous." The tree makes the fruit, not the fruit the tree: and therefore the tree must be good, before the fruit can be good, Matth. vii. 18. A righteous man may make a righteous work, but no work of an unrighteous man can make him righteous. Now we become righteous only by faith through the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, Rom. v. 1.

2. A soul not united to Jesus Christ, cannot work righteousness, John xv. 5. *Without me ye can do nothing.* All life and strength

spiritual for sinners, is treasured up in Christ, 1 John v. 11, 12. As the pipe laid short of the fountain, must be empty of water; so is the soul of life and strength, which is not united to Christ. And it is by faith that souls are united to him. So, where there is no faith, there is no life; and where there is no life, there is no working of righteousness.

3. While the conscience is not purged of the guilt of eternal death, the works wrought by the man are but dead works, not works of righteousness, Heb. ix. 14. And it is only the blood of Christ applied by faith that can purge the conscience, remove the curse, which, while it lies on a man, will leave him eternally barren.

4. *Lastly*, Faith is the spring of all good works. There the man's working of righteousness begins, 1 Tim. i. 5. 1 John iii. 12. How was it that Abel wrought righteousness? The apostle tells us, Heb. xi. 4, "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness, that he was righteous." And without it no man can do a work pleasing to God, and therefore no righteous work, ver. 6. Whatever unbelievers do is but a shadow of righteousness. They are not married to Christ, therefore they cannot bring forth fruit to God; they are not begotten again, and made his children; therefore their obedience is but slavish: they are not partakers of his life, therefore their works are but dead.

Wherefore let men work as they will, if they be not true believers in Christ, they are not workers of righteousness; and, consequently, they will not be dwellers in heaven. Ye must then close with Christ in the first place, and by faith receive the gift of imputed righteousness, or ye will never truly bear this character of a citizen of Zion. A man shall as soon force fruit out of a branch broken off from the tree and withered, as work righteousness without believing in, and uniting with Christ. These are two things by which those that hear the gospel are ruined.

(1.) One is, works without faith; and here the legalist settles. Witness the Pharisee, Luke xviii. 11, 12, "God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess." And this he does to his own destruction. He aims at the duties of the law, but neglects the great duty of the gospel. He aims to do good, but never takes the right way, the only way to be good. Hence his religion is no more but a parcel of hypocritical performances, dead works, the man himself being still a stranger to the life of God, because out of Christ.

In opposition to this, the citizen of Zion is a believer, one that

has closed with Christ by faith, and that still lives by faith, Gal. ii. 20, deriving virtue and strength from Jesus, and leaning on his righteousness alone; who was taken, and doth still take Christ for righteousness and sanctification too, Isa. xlv. 24. Agreeable to this first part of the character,

(2.) The other is, faith without works; which is but a dead faith, that will never save the soul. With this carnal gospellers satisfy themselves to their own destruction, James ii. 14, 11, "What doth it profit, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? Faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone." They pretend to believe in Christ, but are not conscientious in the performance of holy duties. They will take Christ for their Priest to save them from hell, but not for their King to save them from their sins. And so in effect they would make Christ the minister of sin.

In opposition to this, the citizen of Zion, being a true believer, is a worker too, a worker of righteousness. Being married to Christ, he brings forth the fruit of holy obedience; being raised with Christ, he lives to God, and serves in newness of the spirit. This brings me to the

Second part, He worketh righteousness towards God. He is one that labours sincerely to give God his due, being just and righteous in his dealings with his Maker. There is a duty that men owe to God, by the rule of justice: it is just that we perform it, and it is a wrong done to him, to withhold it, because it is his due from us, Matth. xxii. 21. *Render unto God the things that are God's.* And thus men are said to work righteousness, Isa. lxiv. 5. "Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness. Acts x. 35, In every nation, he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." The true Christian that shall be a dweller in heaven, being furnished from heaven by faith for working righteousness, worketh accordingly, sincerely endeavouring to give God his due. And this part of his character shall be branched out in the following particulars.

1. He gives God his heart. God requires it, Prov. xxiii. 26. *My son, give me thine heart.* It is his due, because he made it, and he alone is the fit match for it, and only can satisfy it: and the believer gives it him, saying, as Psal. lxxiii. 25. "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee." He gives God his heart, to be his temple, his throne, the holy of holies consecrated to him. He lifts his heart and affections off the world, his lusts, yea even his lawful comforts, and gives it back to the proper owner; not daring to alienate it, knowing that to be sacrilegious robbing of God.

2. He gives God himself, as the Macedonians did, of whom it is said, that they *first gave their own selves to the Lord*, 2 Cor. viii. 5. The man does not look on himself as proprietor and master of himself. He is the Lord's by creation, and the Lord's by baptismal dedication, by redemption, by daily conservation: and therefore he makes himself the Lord's also by voluntary resignation, saying, *I am the Lord's*, Isa. xliv. 5. He owns himself debtor to God for his being, and therefore accounts it just that he *be* for him, Hos. iii. 3. and therefore that soul and body be employed for him, 2 Cor. vi. 20.

3. He gives obedience to God, Luke i. 6. Obedience is his due from us. He is the Lord, our Creator and Sovereign Lord; our Redeemer; and therefore we are bound to obey him, Exod. xx. 2. He is our King and Lawgiver, our Father and supreme Master, Mal. i. 6. And the conscience of duty owing to him, on all these and other accounts, moves them that shall dwell in heaven to be obedient to him, as his creatures, subjects, children, and servants. And they gave him illimited obedience, as their absolute Lord, not disputing, but doing his commands, as Abraham did, Gen. xxii.; universal obedience, as knowing that all his precepts are right, Psal. cxix. 128; the obedience of the inner man, resigning their souls to the will of his commands and of his providence: and of the outward man, studying a blameless life, Luke i. 6. Psal. xxiv. 3, 4; a cheerful, son-like obedience, with heart and good-will, Isa. lxiv. 5; and constant obedience, Psal. cxix. 112.

4. He gives God his worship, John ix. 31. He is our God, and therefore it is his due, Matth. iv. 10; and they who will not worship him, would ungod him if they could. But they that shall dwell in heaven, walk in the ordinances of his worship, as well as in his commands of obedience, Luke i. 6. They are universal in his worship, *ibid.*; they dare not keep back a part of his known worship from him. They give him outward worship, in prayer, praise, &c. They worship him in secret, Matth. vi. 6; in their families, if they have a family, being awed by that threatening, "Pour out thy fury upon—the families that call not on thy name;" and in the congregation of his people. And they join inward worship with the outward, which distinguisheth them from the hypocrite, as the other from the profane, John iv. 24. Phil. iii. 3. The inward worship is the worship of the heart, in faith, fear, love, patience, humiliation, &c.

5. He gives God the use of his talents. It is his due, for they are all his, given to men to improve them for him. They that shall dwell in heaven, know that their time is the Lord's, and they must be accountable to him for it; therefore they dare not squander it

away idly, doing nothing, far less wickedly doing mischief, Psal. xc. 12. Their gifts are the Lord's, given them to profit withal, 1 Cor. xii. 7; therefore they dare neither keep them laid up in the napkin of civility, satisfying themselves that they do no ill with them, as the slothful servant did, Luke xix. 20; nor hide them in the earth of carnality, laziness, and worldly-mindedness, so burying them, Matth. xxv. 25; knowing that both the one and the other are rejected of God, as unprofitable servants; that their wealth, honour, credit, authority, opportunities of doing good, are the Lord's; that God has entrusted them therewith for his own service, and they must reckon for the use of them, Luke xvi. 2; and therefore it is their care to honour the Lord with their substance, to improve their honour, &c. for God, 1 Sam. ii. 30. to do good as they have opportunity; that their youth, health, and strength are the Lord's; that these will not last, and therefore they will use them for God, while they have them; knowing that the best is his due.

6. He gives God the praise and thankful acknowledgment of all his comforts and enjoyments, Psal. c. 3. It is his due, for they are all his benefits. Our daily bread we have at his table: he gives us our good things, he gives us the good of them; and nothing can be more comfortable to us than he makes it to be. So while others sacrifice to their own net, and say as Deut. viii. 17. "My power and the might of my hand hath gotten me this wealth; they remember the Lord, for it is he that giveth them power to get wealth," verse 18. This thankfulness runs out into a stream of obedience.

7. He gives God the disposal of his lot, Psal. xlvii. 4. It is his due; hence is that, Matth. xx. 15. "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?" So they that shall dwell in heaven are self-denied ones; all they have in the world is at his disposal, their health, wealth, liberty, and life itself, Luke xiv. 26.

8. *Lastly*, He gives God the chief part in all his duty to man, out of conscience towards God doing his duty to men: his piety is the fountain of his justice, Eph. vi. 7. This is God's due, because he is the best of beings, therefore to be loved for himself, and all others for his sake. Hence he serves God in all his relations, and dealings with men, doing his duty to them as the will of God: so his love to God is the spring of his duty to men.

These are they that work righteousness; and without doubt, it may be seen, that there are few such in the world.

Thirdly, He works righteousness towards man. He that shall dwell in heaven hereafter, as he believes in Christ, and performs his duty to God in sincerity, so he is conscientious in the practice of his duty to his neighbour; and this completes his character as a

worker of righteousness. Moral honesty is an essential part of true Christianity, without which no man shall see the Lord, 1 Cor. vi. 9. True religion makes a man not only pious towards God but righteous towards his neighbour. This part of the character of a citizen of Zion we may take up in these three generals.

1. He is one that will wrong no man to his knowledge. This is a necessary evidence of sonship to God. Hence believers are represented to be "blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation," Phil. ii. 15. Job took the comfort of it as such, chap. xxxi. 7, 8. "If my step hath turned out of the way, and mine heart walked after mine eyes, and if any blot hath cleaved to my hands: then let me sow, and let another eat; yea, let my offspring be rooted out." The best of men must no doubt say in this case as in others, "Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults." But the habitual practice of injustice, and wronging our neighbours, is not, I am sure, the spot of God's children, but a mark of the devil's slaves, 1 Cor. vi. 9. And he that pursues his course that way through the world, will land in hell hereafter.

2. He is one that sincerely studies to do as he would be done to. This a natural conscience dictates, and the revealed will of God confirms, Matth. vii. 12. "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." And regenerating grace writes it in brighter characters on the renewed heart, Heb. viii. 10. Where the love of God is planted, the love of our neighbour is planted too. If we love God with a supreme love, we will love our neighbour as ourselves, and, consequently, study to do to him as we would have him, agreeable to the rules of the world, do to us, if we were in his circumstances. When Christ enters the heart, the great idol self is knocked down. Selfishness makes men carry towards their neighbour, as if their neighbour were bound in duty to them, but they free. But grace makes the man see that there is one Lawgiver over, and one law to him and his neighbour too.

3. He is one that makes conscience of giving every one their due. This also is the dictate of natural conscience, confirmed by the word, Rom. xiii. 7. *Render to all their dues;* and is the native exercise of that righteousness wherein the new man is created, Eph. iv. 24. This is right, that every one have their right of us, for we are members one of another; and if men be not conscientious in this, how do they bear the image of the righteous God, or how can they expect the crown of righteousness? Luke xvi. 11.

I mean not, as if no righteous person could transgress or offend against the rules of justice. No, no; the justice of the saints to-

wards men is but imperfect in this life, as well as their holiness towards God. Even David was the man in the parable that took his neighbour's lamb, and good Asa *oppressed some of the people*, 2 Chron. xvi. 10. And the father of the faithful was justly reproved by a Heathen king for the wrong he did him, Gen. xx. 9.

But it is one thing to sin of ignorance and weakness, and another deliberately and of set purpose. It is one thing to be hurried into an act of injustice, by a violent temptation, passion, or fear, as in the aforementioned cases; and another to be habitually unjust, and ready to fall in with every opportunity of that nature. The former is incident to saints, the latter peculiar to sinners: the one repent their folly bitterly, when it is discovered to them, and will be ready to their power to make reparation, and are afraid to fall back into the same iniquitous ways again, watch against them, and the habitual bent of their heart is to do justly: but the other goes on impenitently in his sin, and is ready for the next temptation, and opportunity of dealing unjustly, because the proud, covetous, selfish spirit reigns in him, to his destruction.

So still it remains true, that the citizen of Zion, though he is not legally and perfectly just, is just evangelically, in a gospel-sense. He is a sincere worker of righteousness towards man; he is sincerely righteous in his dealings towards his neighbour. This shall be branched out in several particulars.

1. He is righteous in his particular relations, giving his relatives what is due to them by that relation they stand in to him, Luke i. 6. He is righteous to them,

(1.) In the special duties of the relation. There is a duty the husband owes to the wife, and the wife to the husband; children to parents, and parents to children; servants to masters, and masters to servants, &c. as such. And these duties they owe to them by a natural tie, or a voluntary compact. And the citizen of Zion worketh righteousness, in making conscience of these duties to their relatives, whether they be husbands, wives, &c. 1 Cor. vii. 33, 34. Eph. vi. 1, 5, 6. And the neglect of these will prove one to be none of those that shall dwell in heaven.

(2.) In common duties. The common duties of justice which they owe to every body, they will not deny to their own relations. So husbands wasting their substance to the detriment of their wives and children, are none of the citizens of Zion, 1 Tim. v. 8. Nor wives embezzling, and putting away their husbands' goods, to their loss and without their knowledge, Prov. xiv. 1. and xxxi. 12. Children that embezzle and take away their parents' substance without their consent, Prov. xxviii. 24. Servants wronging their masters,

in taking of their substance to themselves, or giving it away to others without their consent, Tit. ii. 9, 10. It is injustice in all these, as being against the right of their relatives: and all such as tempt or encourage them to such injustice, wrong their own souls, Prov. xxix. 24.

2. He is righteous in his choice of the manner of life he betakes himself to for his through-bearing. This is a piece of justice he owes to mankind, and particularly to the society whereof he is a member, that he be useful in it, and not hurtful. And therefore the citizen of Zion,

(1.) Dare not be an idle man, without employment, if providence has not quite disabled him for any employment. None can with a good conscience lay the burden of their maintenance on others, further than what they cannot really prevent by their own utmost application, 2 Thess. ii. 10. Idle persons by that means are unjust both to them that have, to whom they are without necessity a burden, and they are unjust to those that are poor and really unable to help themselves, Eph. iv. 28.

(2.) He dare not use an unlawful employment, Acts xix. 19. All gain gotten by unlawful means is stolen or robbed in the sight of God, and is injustice to men. And such is the gain of a lawful employment used unlawfully, as selling of drink to men to the abuse of themselves and God's good creature. Ye would do your neighbour less hurt, if ye would steal the money out of his pocket; for by that means you would hurt him only in his purse, but at this rate you wound his conscience too. And when ye have considered that passage seriously, Hab. ii. 15, "Wo unto him that giveth his neighbour drink: that puttest thy bottle to him, and makest him drunken also, that thou mayst look on their nakedness:" ye will see your gain that way is like the gaining of a burning coal into your own bosom.

3. He is righteous in the management of his employment, 1 Cor. vii. 24. "Let every man wherein he is called, therein abide with God." He that walks with God at all, will walk with him in his employment, of whatsoever sort it be: following it conscientiously, as under the eye of God. There is a snare in all employments, and a falsehood incident to all trades, by reason of the corruptions of men's heart: but he that shall dwell in heaven, will be aware of it, while he is upon the earth, Heb. xii. 1.

4. He is righteous in his commerce and bargains with men, 1 Thess. iv. 6. "That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter." It is God's command that we do justly in these things, that we do as we would be done to. People's undermining one an-

other in their bargains, raising themselves on their neighbour's ruins, taking their lands over their heads, raising and racking their rents to them, taking advantage in their bargains of their neighbour's necessities, or ignorance, using false weights and measures, adulterating their wares, not keeping condition, but oppressing either in buying or selling, requiring more than due, or keeping back part of the price, need no more to shew the injustice of them, but for men to look in to their own breasts, and ask their own consciences, if that be the way they think it reasonable others should do with them, Lev. xxv. 14, "If thou sell ought unto thy neighbour, or buyest ought of thy neighbour's hand; ye shall not oppress one another." Consider what is said, Isa. xxxiii. 15, 16, "He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly, he that despiseth the gain of oppressions,—he shall dwell on high."

5. He is righteous in matters of neighbourhood and fellowship. That is an awful word in this affair, Deut. xxvii. 17. "Cursed be he that removeth his neighbour's land-mark." A good man will be as loath to do wrong in neighbourhood, as to receive wrong; and will find himself in conscience bound, not only to abstain from wilful wronging of them, but to beware of culpable negligence, whereby they may sustain loss, though undesigned. And as he is in partnership with others, he will beware of taking more to himself than falls to his share, or raising gain to himself in a way that causeth his neighbour's loss. For all these are contrary to the love we owe to others as to ourselves.

6. He is righteous in matters of trust, that is, in things committed to his care, and put into his hand. Treachery under trust is among the worst pieces of injustice: and betrayers of their trust in things of this world, cannot expect the things of a better world to be committed to them, Luke xvi. 11. Let such as have other people's business and goods committed to them take heed to this; and act as in the sight of God, and in the sight of those who trust them, and beware of the snare that is ready for them there, as they would not ruin their own souls, Prov. xxviii. 20.

7. He is righteous in the matter of loans. Borrowing and lending is a necessary bond of society among neighbours, and a good man will find himself to be obliged to do justly therein; to see that the thing borrowed by him, sustain no notable loss by his means, or if it do, to repair the loss, and faithfully to restore the thing borrowed, He will pay his just debts if he be able, and will conscientiously see that he run himself into no more than he is in a probable condition to pay, Psal. xxxvii. 21. He will not stave off his neighbour from what is his due unnecessarily, and oblige him to vexatious law-suits

for his own, Prov. iii. 28, 30. Nor will he use extortion in compensation of loans, imposing upon his neighbour beyond law and right, Psal. xv. ult.

8. He is righteous in the matter of lost things found by him, and will conscientiously restore, if the owner can be found, and will not dare fraudulently to conceal it, and much less dispatch it so as the owner cannot have it again. For that fraudulent concealment and retaining such a thing, is no other but a continued theft and wronging our neighbour, Deut. xxii. 1—3. So righteous Jacob determined, Gen. xxx. 33. And to this may be added, that the righteous man will find himself obliged to prevent any loss to his neighbour, which he has an opportunity to prevent, whether his neighbour see it or not.

9. He is righteous in using this world's goods to the honour of God, and the relief of the needy, Psal. cxii. 5, 9. Though men have the right of propriety in their own substance, yet the poor have a right of charity in them, so far as they need, and their neighbours can spare. And the truth is, those to whom God has given substance, they are his stewards, and have their orders from him to steward faithfully as they will be answerable; and the poor and needy are among those who by him are committed to their stewardship. And the weight laid on this piece of righteousness, as an evidence of imputed righteousness, by our Lord himself, Luke xvi. 9, and in Matth. xxv. will always have weight with a good man, to be a worker of righteousness, in point of a charitable disposition.

Lastly, In a word, he is conscientiously righteous in all things that concern his neighbour, Micah vi. 8. He that is a Christian indeed will be a strict observer of truth, faithfulness, and justice, in the matters of this world; dealing with men as under the all-seeing eye of God. And he will never want a quick-sighted witness to his dealings with men, while there is a God in heaven, whether the party he deals with be absent or present, skilful or simple, able to revenge any wrong done to him, or unable.

II. I proceed to confirm this doctrine. To this end consider,

I. God is a righteous God. He is righteous in his nature, and he loves righteousness, Psal. xi. *ult.* He cannot but do what is right, Gen. xviii. 25. So the king of heaven is a righteous King: what communion can they have with him that are unrighteous?

2. It is the great end of redemption by Christ, that his people may be righteous, and so fitted for heaven. He gave himself to purchase the Spirit of faith and holiness, by which they might work, who had lost all power of working righteousness by the fall, Tit. ii. 14. He delivers them from the bondage of their spiritual enemies, that they may serve him in righteousness, Luke i. 74, 75. Accor-

dingly it is promised to the Redeemer, Isa. lx. 21. *Thy people shall be all righteous.*

3. *Lastly,* Men will be judged and sentence will be passed upon them before the tribunal of God, according to their works, Rev. xx. 12, 13. See Matth. xxv. Works of righteousness will be the evidence of a title to heaven; and unrighteous works the cause of damnation.

I shall shut up this branch of the character of a citizen of Zion, with a word of improvement.

Use I. This may let us see that few in this world are safe for another world. Alas! how many are there, (1.) Who are not righteous towards men? (2.) Who make no conscience of giving God his due, and walking righteously with him? And, (3.) Though they may seem to be something in both these respects, yet are not righteous by faith, nor solicitous to be so?

Use II. Of exhortation. Study then to be workers of righteousness, in all the respects that have been declared, and so evidence yourselves to be citizens of Zion.*

THE CITIZEN OF ZION A SPEAKER OF TRUTH IN HIS HEART.

Psalm xv.

—And speaketh the truth in his heart.

Here is the third character of the citizen of Zion, he is a follower of truth. It hath two parts clearly distinguished in the original. (1.) He speaketh truth; what he expresses in words, he is careful that it be consistent with truth. (2.) He speaketh truth in his heart. There is a speaking in the heart without words, Psal. iv. 1. Eccl. ii. 15. This is done by thoughts and reasonings, and much depends on their being consistent with truth. And both these go together to make up the character of one that shall be an inhabitant of heaven. The first part is but a negative mark: it is the addition of the latter that makes the positive mark.

Two doctrines are deducible from the text, viz.

Doct. I. Those that shall be inhabitants of heaven hereafter, are such as make conscience of speaking truth while they are in this world.

* As the auther has not extended this Use in the MS. he probably, on this occasion, recapitulated what he had delivered more fully, on a former occasion, in the application of his exposition of the eighth commandment. There the reader will find it.

Doct. II. They who shall be inhabitants of heaven, are such as not only speak truth to others, but speak truth within their own hearts.

I shall prosecute each doctrine in order.

Doct. I. They that shall be inhabitants of heaven hereafter, are such as make conscience of speaking truth while they are in this world.

In discoursing this doctrine, I shall,

I. Explain this character, or part of the character of a citizen of Zion.

II. Confirm the doctrine.

III. Make application.

I. The first head is to explain this part of the character of a citizen of Zion, That he is one who speaketh the truth. And here I will show,

1. What is truth.

2. What it is to be a speaker of truth.

First, I am to shew what is truth. This question Pilate proposed to Christ, but staid not for an answer, John xviii. 38. Truth is a sacred harmony or agreement of things. Anatomists have observed that the tongue in man is tied with a double string to the heart. And so in truth spoken there is necessary a double agreement of our words.

1. With our heart. That is, to the speaking of truth, it is necessary our words agree with our mind and thoughts about the thing. We must speak as we think, and our tongues must be faithful interpreters of our mind: otherwise we lie, not speaking as we think. So what is truth in itself may be spoken by a man, and yet he be a liar, viz. if he does not think as he speaks.

2. With the thing as it is in itself. Though we think a thing to be so, which is not so, we lie, when we affirm it; because it is not as we say, though we really think it is so. For our mistaken notions of things can never stamp lies to pass current for truths, 2 Thess. ii. 11.

Secondly, I shall shew what it is to be a speaker of truth, which is the character of a citizen of Zion. It lies in two things.

1. A citizen of Zion is one who makes conscience of speaking out the truth in the proper time and season thereof, John xviii. 37. As the head was, so will the members be on the side of truth in the world, 3 John, 8. It is for this end God has called his own people out of the world lying in wickedness and falsehood.

Solomon tells us, Eccl. iii. 7. that, "There is a time to keep

silence, and a time to speak." People may sin egregiously by an unseasonable speaking of the truth, Prov. xxix. 11. "A fool uttereth all his mind." This was Doeg's sin, Psal. lii. Nature has put a double bar on our tongues, and discretion, and much more the grace of God, will add a third. Those whose tongues are like a loose-window in wind, ever clattering, discover themselves to have very little either wit or grace, if any at all. Talkativeness is, (1.) A sign of little awe or dread of God upon the heart, Eccl. v. 2. "Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter anything before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few. God has given men two ears, and but one tongue, which says, that, "every man should be swift to hear, slow to speak," Jam. i. 19. (2.) The fool's badge, Eccl. v. 3. "A fool's voice is known by multitude of words. Prov. xiv. 33. Wisdom resteth in the heart of him that hath understanding: but that which is in the midst of fools is made known." It is the empty barrel that makes most noise; which made an orator ask a double fee of a talkative scholar, one to teach him to speak well, another to teach him to hold his peace. Our words should be few, true, and seasonable.

Now the citizen of Zion is a speaker out of the truth in the season thereof, that is, when he is called of God to speak it. And a man is called to speak out the truth, when the glory of God, or the good of others make it necessary, or their own good, 1 Cor. x. 31; Rom. xiii. 9. Our tongue is called our glory, because thereby we must glorify God. And it is a bond of human society, whereby we ought to contribute to our power to remove those ills that are the plagues and pests of society. This call is twofold.

(1.) Private and providential, wherein men have the call of providence to declare the truth, though there is no human authority obliging them to it. This ordinarily occurs in conversation among men, where truth may be wronged, God dishonoured, ourselves or neighbours injured, if there is no body to speak out the truth. A good Christian will find himself obliged to speak the truth upon this call, though none is desiring him, 1 Sam. xix. 4.

(2.) Public and authoritative, when people are called either by the authority of the magistrate or of the church, judicially to declare the truth. This is a solemn call from God to that duty, which he gives by the mouth of those whom he has put in authority, either making them gods by office, or ambassadors for God. And therefore to decline the speaking out of truth in that case, is to decline God's solemn call to it, and to mar the course of justice, and the honour of God, Isa. lix. 14.

Now, one that shall be an inhabitant of heaven being thus called, will conscientiously as in the sight of God speak out the truth; and that,

[1.] Fully, not daring to conceal the truth, nor any part of it known to them, which may contribute to the clearing of the matter in question. So did that prudent woman mentioned, 2 Sam. xiv. 18. —20. Ananias and Sapphira were struck dead, for their doing otherwise in such a case, Acts v.

[2.] Freely, not being hampered in speaking out the truth by the awe of any person, or the dread of any thing which may befal them for doing their duty which God calls them to, 1 Sam. xix. 4, 5. The dread of God will be on the spirits of his own children, to carry them out in this; and will downweigh respect to all others, Job xxxii. *ult.*

[3.] Clearly, not equivocating, shifting, mincing, obscuring, and wrapping up the truth; so as they who hear it know not what to make of it, Josh. vii. 19, 20. Awful is that curse, Jer. xlviii. 10. "Cursed be he that doth the work of the Lord deceitfully."

[4.] Sincerely, 2 Chron. xix. 9. without feud or favour to any. The grace of God working in the heart will make gracious people to speak as in the sight of God, 2 Cor. ii. 17.

2. A citizen of Zion is one who makes conscience of speaking nothing but the truth at any time, Isa. lxiii. 8. Though we are not at every time to be blabbing out the truth we do know, yet we are at no time to lie against the truth, 2 Cor. xiii. 8. There can be no call to lie, but from the devil, and men's own corrupt hearts, whatever circumstances we be in, Job xiii. 7, 8. There is no time to speak falsely. And we are to speak nothing but truth,

(1.) In speaking to God, in our professions, confessions, and prayers. Hypocrites lie to the Lord, Psal. lxxviii. 36. Sincere souls will speak truth.

(2.) In speaking to men, Eph. iv. 25. whether in private conversation, or in public appearances.

II. I come now to confirm the doctrine. It is evident, if ye consider,

1. That in the saints the image of Satan is defaced, and the power of the corruption of nature broken, Rev. xxi. *ult.* Corrupt men may call Satan father, for he abode not in the truth, but is the father of lies, John viii. 44. And the corruption of nature quickly vents itself in lying, being what the unrenewed heart as naturally brings forth, as the cursed ground brings forth thorns and thistles, Psal. lviii. 3. "The wicked are estranged from the womb, they go astray, as soon as they be born, speaking lies." So that wherever the grace of God comes, it must give a new set.

2. The image of God is repaired in them, which has *truth* for a shining lineament in it, Eph. iv. 24. It was a notable saying of a philosopher, That truth is so great a perfection, that if God would render himself visible, he would take light for his body, and truth for his soul. And the scripture assures us, that Christ shewing himself to the world, was *the light* and *the truth*. God is *truth* itself, and no lie can have place with him, Tit. i. 2; Numb. xxiii. 19. Where then the image of God is repaired, as it is in all the saints, no doubt the lying disposition will be broken in them.

3. The Christian life is a *walking in truth*, 3 John, 3. There is truth of heart in true Christians, and that makes truth of conversation. Yea, it is called a *speaking of truth*, Eph. iv. 15. the whole life of a Christian being an expressing of truth in practice. So that to walk in lies is the very reverse of Christianity.

4. *Lastly*, The Lord has expressly declared, that liars shall be the inhabitants of hell, not of heaven; that in their end they shall not be with God, who is the God of truth, but with the devil, the father of lies, Rev. xxi. *ult.* and xxii. 15.

I shall now make application of this subject.

USE I. This writes death on the faces of two sorts of people.

1. Those who are concealers of the truth, which God calls them to speak out. There are many who can set a brazen face against the truth, and cause their tongues go on in a course of lying against their consciences, and outface and bear down what God and their own consciences know to be truth: and though their confessing the truth would honour God, and be a mean to bring their souls out of the snare of the devil; yet, because it may be to their own shame before men, they will stifle and conceal the truth, Jer. ix. 3, 5. And there are not wanting others, who, however ready they may be to speak in other cases, have never a mouth to open in a good cause, for the suppressing of sin and wickedness. But though they be called of God to speak what they know to be truth, yet they will set their foot on it, and wickedly conceal it, or mince it, and shift the matter, as men who have no fear of God before their eyes. Do such believe there is a heaven and a hell? If they do, how can they think that ever they shall be inhabitants of heaven, in whom the character of a citizen of Zion is not to be found? Let all such remember that awful word, Rom i. 18. "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness, and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness." God will charge the iniquity on those who conceal it, Lev. v. 1. and that as consenting to it, Deut. xiii. 8. Truth is strong, and will prevail, and will set up its head at length, to the confusion of those who bear it down.

2. All liars, who make not conscience of speaking truth, but speak lies and falsehood. This sin of lying, is a common vice: but it is the black brand of one that shall never see heaven. And that this is so very common, notwithstanding that the Scripture is so express in assigning liars for the inhabitants of hell, not of heaven; is not to be thought strange, while that stands in the Bible, Matth. vii. 13. "Wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat." If they that shall be inhabitants of heaven be such as speak the truth, what shall become of liars? Are they not barred out of heaven thereby? And I charge all liars to take this home; and,

(1.) The jesting liars, who will lie to make others merry, he to make sport, Hos. vii. 3. Those men are liberal of the blood of their own souls, who, to make sport to others, will run the risk of everlasting sorrow to themselves. The Prov. xxvi. 18, 19.

(2.) The officious liars, who will lie to do themselves or others a real good turn. They are apt to think, that since they do good by their lies, or intend to do good by them, there is no hazard in such lying. But that is the doctrine of the father of lies, not of the scriptures of truth, 1 John ii. 21. *No lie is of the truth.* If it were possible to save a soul by a lie, or honour God by one, it is unlawful. Hence Job says, chap. xiii. 7. "Will ye speak wickedly for God? and talk deceitfully for him?" The damnation of such is as just, as it is sure, Rom. iii. 8. who do so, if mercy prevent it not.

(3.) The pernicious liars, who lie to do a mischief thereby, Prov. vi. 17. These sorts of liars break at once the bonds of charity and truth, and of all liars are the likest to their father the devil, who was at once a liar and a murderer. Yet how many such are there, whose lying tongues are swords to stab, and arrows to pierce their neighbours, and a fire from hell to set whole societies in a flame?

(4.) The covetous liars, whose covetous hearts use their lying tongues to deceive their neighbour, Prov. xx. 14. "It is naught, it is naught, saith the buyer: but when he is gone his way, then he boasteth." O! what lying is there in buying and selling, and begging, by this means? For a thing of naught men will not stand to lie; if they can gain a very little thing, they will not stand upon the expense of truth, not considering the unspeakable loss of the soul thereby.

(5.) The proud boasting liars, who to raise others' esteem of them, and to be thought fine people, will tell of themselves what has no ground in truth, Prov. xxv. 14. They form to themselves a figure of themselves in their own imagination, and breathe out lies to fix that opinion of them in others. Some who pride themselves in mis-

chief, will tell wickedness of themselves which they never did: but that is enough to make them guilty of it before God. Pride of heart is a nurse of lying.

(6.) The flattering liars, who speak of others the good they do not think, just to curry favour with them, Psal. xii. 2, 3. They fawn like dogs, and sooth up men in falsehood and vanity, like the devil. Their flattering tongue is soft as oil, but in the mean time it is more ruining than a sword, Prov. xxvi. 28. For by it two fall at once, the flattered as well as the flatterer, Prov. xxix. 5.

(7.) The fearful liars, who, for fear of others, make lies their refuge, as children often do, bewraying thereby the corruption of their nature, Psal. lviii. 3; and others too, who though men and women in years, are but children in courage, Prov. xxix. 25. *The fear of man bringeth a snare.* But sad is the doom of those who have so little regard to truth as to be frightened into lies, Rev. xxi. 8.

(8.) The talkative liars. Solomon observes, Prov. x. 19. *In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin.* They who are given to much talking, will hardly be found regardful of truth. When their fund of truth runs out, or occurs not, they will rather foist in lies than hold their peace. And I believe a strict regard to truth would be a notable means to repress talkativeness.

(9.) The rash liars, who lie through inadvertency and customary looseness of spirit as to their words, 2 Sam. xiii. 30. Much sin is contracted this way. There is so much carelessness as to what men speak, that their tongues outrun their minds, and ere they are aware they are mired in a lie. But if men must give an account of their idle words though true, much more of their lying words, though rash and inadvertent.

USE II. I exhort you to speak the truth, and dehort you from lying. For motives, consider,

1. God is the God of truth, Deut. xxxii. 4. He is the author of truth, and truth is so much of his nature, that he who made the world of nothing, can no more lie than he can cease to be God, Tit. i. 2. So that as fire is contrary to water, yea hell to heaven; so is the liar to God.

2. The devil is the author and father of lies, John viii. 44. He ruined the world at first with a lie, Gen. iii. 4, 5. He lied upon God, he lied to our first parents and deceived them, and he lied of himself. What wonder is it that he is so concerned to get the trade of lying kept up in the world, since by it he succeeded so well at first?

3. It is the bane of human society. Truth is the bond of society, which keeps men together, causing them to trust one another. Ly-

ing cuts this bond asunder, and so subverts the comfort and advantage of society, Micah vii. 5. And therefore liars deserve to be extruded out of society with other men, for they are the plagues and pests of it.

4. It is a mean, base, and contemptible thing; so that no body regards a liar. Even they that will not stand to lie, cannot endure to be held and reputed liars; they will be ready to revenge the affront. This says that there is something so base in lying, that it leaves a man no credit. And no wonder; for finding a man to lie sometimes, no body can trust him securely, even when he speaks truth.

5. Lying is the native product of the corruption of nature, the effect of the spawn of the old serpent left in the hearts of the children of men, Psal. lviii. 3. It is a part of the old man of sin, that will be put off where-ever the grace of God comes, Eph. iv. 25; Col. iii. 9. And there cannot be a more certain sign of one in the black state of nature, under the curse, than a habit of lying.

6. It is an abomination to God, and God abhors liars, Prov. vi. 17, 19. and xii. 22. Though ye think to please yourselves and others by lying, where is the gain when ye thereby make yourselves abominable to God?

7. *Lastly*, Lying will undoubtedly ruin your souls for evermore. God will destroy liars, Psal. v. 7. They shall surely perish, Prov. xix. 9; Rev. xxi. *ult.* and xxii. 15.

Be concerned to curb it in young ones, as ye love their souls. Lying and stealing are akin, Hos. iv. 2. And when once they get a habit of it, how hard is it to get them off it?

Remember that God's omniscient eye is on you always, and mortify those corruptions whence lying arises.

Doct. II. They who shall be inhabitants of heaven, are such as not only speak truth to others, but speak truth within their own hearts.

In discoursing this point, I shall,

I. Premise some things for the right understanding of it.

II. Shew the import of this part of the citizen of Zion's character.

III. Confirm the doctrine.

IV. Improve the subject.

1. I am to premise some things for the right understanding of this point.

1. When God created man, he set up the light of truth in his soul, that thereby he might clearly perceive the way to true happiness, and might not by false colours be led off his way, if he would

take heed thereto, Gen. iii. 21. The remains of the natural law in the hearts of the Heathens, do evidence the knowledge of the truth necessary to true happiness, to have been perfect in innocent Adam, Rom. iii. 15; Eccl. vii. 29.

2. When man fell, the truth set up in his heart fell down too. Instead of his primitive light which represents things in their native colours, there came in darkness, which presents things in false colours unto men, Eph. v. 8. and makes them easy to be imposed upon and led out of the way. The father of lies prevailing with our first parents, left in their hearts a spawn of vanity, falsehood, and lies.

3. Hence proceed mistaken notions of the most weighty things, false apprehensions of them, and false reasonings about them, whereby men lie to themselves most dangerously, and deceive and cheat themselves thereby, even as by lying words they lie to deceive and cheat others, Isa. xliv. 20. And upon this kind of lying the scripture often fathers sinners' ruin, Psal. l. 21. "These things hast thou done, and I kept silence: thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thyself: but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes:" and therefore it shows the necessity of laying them aside, Isa. lv. 7. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts." But this is the reigning disposition of the hearts of all men by nature, and the thoughts of most men touching the state of their souls are one continued web of lies, Jer. xvii. 9.

4. Where the grace of God comes, renewing and changing the heart, truth is restored again within the heart, Eph. v. 8. Men's notions of spiritual things are rectified, their thoughts and reasonings about them are quite altered, 2 Cor. v. 17. We see it exemplified in Paul's case, Phil. iii. 7. "What things were gain to me, (says he), those I counted loss for Christ." Hence repentance is, in scripture language, a coming to one's self, like a madman restored to his right mind; an after-wit, the man being brought to second thoughts about his soul-matters, by which the first thoughts are discovered to have been falsehood and lies, quite wide of the truth.

5. *Lastly*, From all this it necessarily follows, that it must be a distinguishing character of a saint, to speak truth within his own heart; which no unregenerate man, while he is such, does ever arrive at, Tit. iii. 3. Others being under the power of Satan, truth has not its efficacy within their hearts.

II. I shall next shew the import of this part of the citizen of Zion's character, that he is one that speaketh the truth in his heart.

1. Citizens of Zion are not deceivers of themselves as to their own spiritual state, Gal. vi. 3. It is very natural for men to lie on

themselves to themselves in that matter, looking to themselves in a false glass, which represents them to be in the favour of God, while they are in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity. Thus did Paul lie of himself to himself, in his unconverted state, Rom. vii. 9. "I was alive without the law once." Laodicea breathed out a heap of lies of this sort, Rev. iii. 17. "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing." And though men think so of themselves, it is not one whit the more true, Isa. xliv. 20. The first work of the Spirit in conversion, is to cause men speak truth in their hearts in this point, Luke xv. 17; Rom. vii. 9.

2. They labour to approve themselves to God in their way; not satisfying themselves with the approbation of men, but endeavouring to carry themselves as in the sight of God, Rom. ii. 28, 29. Many will be at some pains to maintain truth in their conversation with men, who are very little concerned for truth in the inward parts, where they have to do with God alone. But a true Christian will be mainly concerned for this last, as the spring of the other. Hence David says, Psal. li. 6. "Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom."

3. Truth is the prevailing predominant principle in their hearts. And therefore the Christian life is called a *speaker of truth*, Eph. iv. 15. *walking in truth*, 3 John 3. Regeneration casts the heart into the very mould of truth, Rom. vi. 17. And so the truth taking the throne in the heart, frees them from the power of the deceitful lust which had a reigning power over them before, John viii. 32.

(1.) Law truth is a predominant principle in the man's heart. And it serves to convince the man of his sinfulness of nature and life; to shew him his natural liableness to the curse for sin; to discover his absolute need of an imputed righteousness, and being interested in Christ, the absolute need of universal holiness of heart and life, John xvi. 8. Thus he is made to speak truth in his heart in those points, wherein the hearts of others to whom the law is never yet come in power, are stuffed with lies to their own destruction.

(2.) Gospel-truth is a predominant principle in them. And it serves to point the soul to Jesus Christ, as its alone righteousness, and fountain of sanctification, 1 Cor. i. 30; to carry the sinner entirely out of himself for acceptance and favour with God; to bring him forward to all the beauties of holiness, and to carry him off them all in point of confidence, Phil. iii. 3. And thus the Christian is made to speak truth in his heart in those points, wherein hypocrites, legalists, and formalists go on in a course of soul-ruining lies.

4. They form their thoughts of soul-matters, sin, duty, safety,

and danger, not according to their own lusts, nor the course of the world: but according to the word of God, which is most firm truth, Psal. cxix. 30, 31. Hence those things which others see no ill in, they dare not meddle with; because they form their judgment of them by the word, while others have no regard to the testimony of the word there-anent. Here the ungodly go quite wrong, speaking lies within their hearts.

They often herein downright contradict the word. They will promise themselves safety in a course wherein God's word declares there can be no safety, Deut. xxix. 9. They will form to themselves thoughts of God contrary to his holiness, Psal. l. 21. They will soothe themselves in thoughts unbecoming his omniscience, that they may enjoy their secret wickedness, Ezek. viii. 12. They think to contemn God, and yet escape, Psal. x. 13. They promise themselves continuance of worldly prosperity, notwithstanding God has declared the contrary, Psal. x. 6. and xlix. 11. And many such thoughts pass through the hearts of men: and what are they all but so many heart lies, which they make to themselves to their own ruin?

5. *Lastly*, They form their reasonings in soul-matters according to the principles of the word, and not their own corrupt lusts and affections, 2 Cor. x. 5. The lusts of ungodly men bear the sway in them, and their reasonings are managed by the power of their lusts, so as they may be accommodated to their corrupt affections. The man desires that there were not a God, and he considers how they prosper that despise him, and so says in his heart, *There is no God*, Psal. xiv. 1. and concludes it is vain to be religious, Mal. iii. 14, 15. He hears God is merciful; and thence he concludes, he may indulge himself in his sinful courses, and yet be safe in the end; thus speaking lies in his heart.

III. To confirm this doctrine, consider,

1. They are all regenerated, savingly changed in all the faculties of their souls, John iii. 3. And in regeneration the law of God is written over again in their hearts, according to the great promise of the covenant, Heb. viii. 10. "I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts." Thus the light is set up within them, and the former darkness, under which the reigning deceit of the heart lodged, is put away. Their minds are renewed.

2. Sincerity and uprightness of heart, is that without which no man shall see the Lord. Matth. v. 8. The foolish virgins were shut out notwithstanding their fair outside, because there was no truth in their hearts, 1 Sam. xvi. 7. Hypocrites are they who speak not the truth in their hearts, and ruin and destruction certainly abide them, Matth. xxiv. *ult.*

3. If truth is not in the heart, the life will be but a mass of lies, falsehood, and vanity, Matth. vi. 23. Darkness and reigning deceit in the heart, will ever produce an unholy life: and they that live not holy, how shall they die happy? Heb. xii. 14.

I conclude with a short word of improvement.

Use I. This doctrine writes death to several sorts of persons.

1. Those who have never yet learned, by the Spirit's teaching, what a God the Lord is, how greatly he hates sin, and how severely he punishes it. Their notions of God are false, and under them they find shelter to their lusts. A clear evidence they have not yet known the Lord. But sooner or later they will find their mistake, and find they have not spoke truth in their hearts of God, Psal. l. 21.

2. Those whose natural notions of sin have not yet been corrected, by feeling the bitterness of it, Rom. vii. 9. Many are ruined by not discerning the ill of sin: if they had just thoughts of it, they durst not venture on it so freely as they do; more than they would venture to take a serpent in their bosom. But their hearts lie to them about it, and they love to have it so.

3. Those who have never yet felt the absolute need of the blood and Spirit of Christ Jesus to remove their guilt, and break the power of sin in them. There is no other way to get it removed, Acts iv. 12; and those who look for it another way, will find at length to their cost, that they have not spoke truth in their hearts.

4. Those who have not yet learned to make the word of God the rule of their life in all points, Gal. iv. 16. Many have very little use for their Bibles, for regulating of their conversation. The course of this world serves them for a rule, and their own corrupt inclinations serve them for the same purpose. They will find these to have led them to lie in their hearts to themselves to their own ruin.

Use II. Be exhorted to take heed to your hearts, that ye speak truth there, and deceive not yourselves. For motives, consider,

1. Self-deceiving is frequent in the world, and there is a principle of self-love in every one leading them to it. Men of all sorts, professors and profane are apt to fall into it; therefore be on your guard.

2. Your eternal state depends on it. If men be not led into truth in their hearts, they can never see nor fall on the way to happiness.

3. *Lastly.* It will make a dreadful awakening when the deceitful dream is at an end.

Examine yourselves then, and see that ye get your judgment of spiritual things formed by the word.

THE

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERS

OF

TRUE BELIEVERS.

III. IN RELATION TO THEIR SPEECH, AND REVERENCE OF GOD'S NAME.

A CAVEAT AGAINST PROFANE SWEARING, AND A PERSUASIVE TO PLAIN SPEAKING, WITHOUT UNHALLOWED ADDITIONS.

JAMES v. 12.

*But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea, be yea, and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation.**

IN these words we have three things.

I. A serious caveat against profane oaths or swearing: for otherwise an oath is an ordinance of God, Heb. vi. 16. and so to be used upon a due call thereto, Jer. iv. 2. In this caveat we have,

(1.) The matter cautioned against. [1.] Swearing by the *creatures*, as by *heaven* or *earth*, forms of oaths, it would seem, then were in use among untender men. [2.] *Any other oath* as well as these; oaths of the same kind, namely, by creatures; and oaths of other kinds, namely, by God their Maker. That the latter as well as the former profane swearing is here comprehended, appears from the universality of the expression, and the direction as to men's ordinary converse given in the following words, where the one as well as the other is excluded.

(2.) The manner of the caveat. It is given, [1.] Very affectionately, *My brethren*. They were so in respect of their nation, and in respect of the Christian religion which they professed, being believing Jews. Though heathens and infidels think nothing of swearing, yet it ill becomes the Christian brother-hood, being so

* The sermons on this text were preached at Ettrick in August and September, 1724.

very contrary to the laws of Christ, Matth. v. 34—37*. [2.] With a peculiar earnestness, *Above all things*. This refers to, (1.) His guarding them against impatience, ver. 10, 11. When once men let their passion loose, and lose their patience, they are apt to break out into blasphemies, horrid oaths, and curses. (2.) To a corrupt custom prevailing among the Jews of customary swearing, and therefore hardly to be rooted out: which he would therefore have them with the utmost care and diligence to set themselves against.

2. A plain direction as to men's ordinary converse. In opposition to the larding of your conversation with such profane mixtures, let your speech be plain and simple, consisting of plain affirmations or denials, without these unhallowed additions. If ye intend to assert a thing, which is yea, then say *Yea*, or *Yes*, or, It is so. If ye mean to deny a thing, which is nay, then say, *Nay*, or, It is not so.

3. A motive pressing both the caveat and direction, *Lest ye fall into condemnation*; Gr. *judgment, under judgment*. He looks to the third commandment, of God's *not holding guiltless him that taketh his Name in vain*. God will be avenged on those that do otherwise, and ye will fall under his judgment on that score, if ye purge not your language from these things.

The text affords three doctrines.

Doct. I. Profane swearing is a horrid evil, with the utmost watchfulness to be avoided by all Christians.

Doct. II. God requires men's speech in their ordinary converse to be plain and simple, as yea and nay, without unhallowed additions, of the nature of oaths.

Doct. III. Profane swearing, and the like ungodly speeches akin thereto, will make the guilty fall under the fearful judgment of God.

I shall prosecute each doctrine in order.

Doct. I. Profane swearing is a horrid evil, with the utmost watchfulness to be avoided by all Christians.

Profane swearing is of two sorts; swearing by God or Christ, and by creatures.

First, Swearing by God himself, and by Christ who is God. Such swearing is duty, when the matter is of weight, and men are called thereto of God, Heb. vi. 16. Jer. iv. 2. But it is profane when men swear by God or Christ,

1. Falsely, Mal. iii. 5. This is perjury, which is a falsehood con-

* The author has a set of Sermons on this text, preached also at Ettrick in 1707, but not yet published.

firmed by an oath, a breach at once of the third and ninth command. Sometimes people are called to swear by authority, and swearing falsely in that case they are guilty of perjury. Sometimes they are not called to swear, but of their own accord, without any just call, they swear, and swear what is false. This is doubtless perjury as well as the other, being a swearing falsely.

Perjury is an open affronting of an omniscient just God, and is near akin to Atheism. It is a calling of God to be witness to a lie, a playing with revenging justice, a daring of Heaven's vengeance, a wilful devoting of one's soul to destruction. For in an oath men invoke God to judge them, according to the truth or falsehood of what they swear. It looseth the bond of human society, and deservedly makes men infamous, and binds over the party to the fearful judgments of God, Zech. v. 4, "I will bring it forth, saith the Lord of hosts, and it shall enter into the house of the thief, and into the house of him that sweareth falsely by my name: and it shall remain in the midst of his house, and shall consume it, with the timber thereof, and the stones thereof." Mal. iii. 5, "I will come near to you to judgment, and I will be a swift witness against—false swearers.

2. Vainly, rashly, and usually, in common converse, without any just call, whether the thing sworn be true or false, good or bad, Matth. v. 34, 37. This is that swearing so frequent among those called Christians. Some have a God thus to swear by, though not a God to pray to; as if they would own no God, but to dishonour his name. Others have found the art of joining Christ and Belial so, that one while they will be praying to God, and another while swearing by his holy name profanely. Jam. iii. 10, "Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing."

This is a horrid evil. It is,

(1.) A flat contradiction to the letter of the law, even as murder and adultery is, *Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.* Many ways the commands are broken, though one do not directly transgress the letter of them: so is the third command by a hypocritical profession: but profane swearers cross the letter.

(2.) It is a profanation of a holy thing, which is very dangerous, Lev. xix. 8; a using that for a common, which God has set apart for a holy use only. And, [1.] It is a profanation of the holy name, which is awful, reverend, and holy, Lev. xxii. 32. It is a prostituting of that tremendous name to serve men's lusts and passions. [2.] It is a profanation of an holy ordinance of worship, appointed of God to be used holily and reverently, with hands lifted up to heaven, upon just and weighty causes, and a due call, to be an

end of strife in matters which cannot be otherwise cleared than by invoking God as witness, Jer. iv. 2. "Thou shalt swear, The Lord liveth, in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness."—Would it not make one's heart tremble, to see men profane the sacraments by a common usage of them? An oath is an holy ordinance instituted by God, as well as the sacraments. How then do men fearlessly bring swearing into common use in their common conversation?

(3.) It argues a profane contempt of God, Psal. xxxvi. 1, 3. An ordinary measure of the fear of God upon the heart, would keep a man from profane swearing by his name; and the consciences of common swearers may witness that they would take it heinously, if others should deal as freely and ordinarily with their names, as they do with the name of the God that made them.

Secondly, Swearing by creatures. The Papists worship creatures, and consequently think it lawful to swear by the creatures they worship; as by the holy bread of the sacrament, the bread of God; and no wonder, for they worship it; and by St. Mary, for they worship her too. But how many Protestants are there, who though in their principles they are against giving divine worship to any creature, yet do in contradiction thereto swear by creatures, as by their *faith*, *troth* or *truth*, *soul*, *conscience*, &c. This is in no case lawful, but in every case profane swearing.

1. It is a sacrilege and idolatry. It is a taking away from God the worship due to him alone, and giving it to the creature, Matth. iv. 10. compared with Deut. vi. 13. Swearing is an invoking of the object sworn by to be witness of the truth of what we affirm or deny, to judge and punish us in case we swear falsely, Jer. v. 7. Is your faith, troth, &c., God? No: but you make these idols. And an idol is nothing in the world. It is likely it is even so with your faith, &c. Many hug their faith, troth, &c. so in their mouths by swearing, till their consciences are seared, and neither faith nor truth is left them.

2. These things having a relation to God, the dishonour reaches to him: they are his works, and being so profaned, his name is profaned. *Heaven is God's throne, and the earth his footstool*, Matth. v. 34, 35. and therefore are not to be sworn by, according to our Saviour's reasoning. So may we say, Faith is the gift of God, truth his image, the soul his creature in a special manner, who is the Father of spirits, conscience the candle of the Lord, God's deputy in the soul: and therefore are not to be sworn by.

3. They are not so our own, that we can engage them by an oath, for the least change to be made upon them, Matth. v. 36. In these oaths men do impawn their faith, truth, soul, conscience, to lose

them, if it be not so as they say. And is this a small matter? Where have we such dominion and power over these things, as thus for every trifle to lay them in pawn? Hezekiah broke the brazen serpent when abused to idolatry. Take heed God do not so break and destroy thy soul, while thus played with?

4. It is a horrid abuse of these precious things. Is that faith, by which thou must be saved, or damned without it, no more precious in thine eyes, than thus to make a by-word of it? Is that truth, without which thou art lost with the father of lies, no more to be regarded? Is that soul which could not be redeemed but by the blood of Christ, and that conscience which could no other way be purged, to be thus used?

5. *Lastly*, Swearing by the creatures was ordinary among Pagans, and heretics were the first after the Jews that brought it in among Christians; and Papists, as has been said, maintain it as a principle agreeable to their idolatry. Oh! that men professing Christ and his truth, would be ashamed of them!

USE. I dehort you from swearing, either by God or Christ vainly, without a lawful call, or by the creature in any case. Avoid all swearing in common converse. Let such as have got a custom of it, leave it off; and those who yet are free, watch against it. I offer the following motives to enforce this dehortation.

Mot. 1. It is highly dishonouring to God, and provoking in his sight. He hath said, *Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain*, &c. Whether we consider him as our Creator to whom we owe all reverence, or as our Saviour who has been our Helper, and offers us again the forfeited life and salvation, it is horrible. To hear men profaning the name of that God, who made them, gave them a tongue, life, &c. profaning that name by which they must be saved, or else perish, is frightful. They are made to differ from brutes, by a soul and conscience; and faith and truth makes men saints, differing for other men: how dishonouring is it to God to profane these?

Mot. 2. It is scandalous with respect to our neighbour; and that is no small aggravation of the guilt, Matth. xviii. 7, "Wo unto the world because of offences: for it must needs be that offences come: but wo to that man by whom the offence cometh." Men swear speaking to others ordinarily. And if they that hear them be godly, it wounds them, and grieves them to the heart; and that is dangerous, Matth. xviii. 6. "Whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea." If they be ungodly and profane, it hardens them, and

is apt to breed more contempt of God in them. If men be but sober, it is nauseous to them. Many a time it is a snare, involving others in guilt, always giving a bad example, and so tending to ruin the souls of others, Rom. xiv. 13, 15.

Mot. 3. It is devilish in respect of the smallness of the temptation there is to it. Profit draws the thief to steal, the unjust to cheat, the oppressor to oppress. Pleasure ensnares men into gluttony, drunkenness, uncleanness, and other sensualities. But what profit or pleasure is to be found in swearing? What fruit brings it in, but the abhorrence of the sober, and the fearful judgments of God? Which of your senses does it gratify? Other sinners serve the devil for pay; but the swearer as a volunteer, for nought.

Mot. last, It is ruining, ruining to the soul. (1.) It makes havoc of the soul's case. It wears off tenderness, makes a profane heart, insensible of duty to God. A custom of swearing sears and stupifies the conscience. (2.) It will ruin the soul for ever, and bring wrath upon the guilty. Sometimes it brings visible judgments upon men on the earth, whereof there have been many fearful instances. However, if they repent not, it will ruin them in another world, Deut. xxviii. 58, 59. "If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law, that are written in this book, that thou mayst fear this glorious and fearful Name, The LORD thy GOD; then the Lord will make thy plagues wonderful, and the plagues of thy seed, even great plagues, and of long continuance."

DOCT. II. God requires men's speech in their ordinary converse to be plain and simple, as yea and nay, without unhallowed additions of the nature of oaths.

This plainness and simplicity of speech in ordinary converse, we may take a view of in these two particulars.

First, It consists in men's accustoming themselves to plain and simple asserting or denying of things, according to their judgment; and not lightly bringing in sacred things to confirm what they say, or vent their passion. This is sufficient to answer the ends of common conversation, *Yea*, *Yea indeed*, *Truly*, &c. and obtains among tender persons, who are most regardful of truth.

Secondly, It excludes out of speech in common conversation, all that which is akin to oaths, where there is no sufficient call thereunto. And so it condemns not only all express swearing by God or the creatures, but,

1. All minced oaths, where the form of swearing is not used, but suppressed. Yet one may plainly perceive the words, if they have any sense at all, or be of the nature of swearing; as, *Good faith*,

faith, haith, has', fai', d' ye, Mary, &c. Of these some have such a custom, that they can speak few sentences without them.

(1.) Though one could not be convinced that these things are evil, yet he cannot miss the conviction that they are evil-like. And you can never think that it is duty to God or your neighbour to speak so. On this very ground ye ought to forbear them, 1 Thess. v. 22. "Abstain from all appearance of evil." Jude, 23. "—Hating even the garments spotted by the flesh." Whoso will not shun appearances of evil, will easily venture on real evils.

(2.) I appeal to your consciences, whether these be the language of the most tender and serious sort of Christians, or of profane men and rough untender professors; and whether or not the more tender any one is in their walk, their speech is purged from these. Let that then have weight with you, spoken by the apostle, Phil. iv. 9. "Those things which ye have both learned and received, and heard and seen in me, do."

(3.) They are offensive to the serious godly; they grate on their ears, as the language of hell. It is grievous to them to hear men who are baptized in the name of Christ, speaking half the language of Canaan, and half that of Ashdod. And on this score they are dangerous, Matth. xviii. 6, 7. forecited.

(4.) At best they are idle words, and therefore sinful. What good purpose do they serve for? Are they of any use for God's honour, your own good, or the good of those with whom ye converse? Consider therefore that declaration, Matth. xii. 36. "I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment."

(5.) They are more than yea and nay, and of another kind; and so are condemned in our text. And ye must either make minced oaths of them, or ye cannot make sense of them. Is not *Good faith is't*, &c. more, and of another kind, than *Yea it is?* Take heed of them then, lest ye fall into condemnation. Is downright profane swearing a thing that it is such a pity to be deprived of the liberty of, that ye must needs retain some remains of it with you?

But some may be ready to say, They are but little sins. *Ans.* Every sin deserves God's wrath; and there is none so little, but they will ruin you for ever, if they be not washed away by the Redeemer's blood, as one little leak will sink the ship. Gal. iii. 10. "Cursed is he that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." If they are but little, how wilt thou do a great thing for God, that wilt not please him in such a small matter? Alas! if they be little, they are not few. Many grains make a mountain, and many drops an ocean. If one be

drowned, it is all one to him, whether it be in a little water or in the ocean.

2. All light or irreverent using of the name of God. His name is dreadful, and requires to be mentioned with profound reverence: and it will be found, that those who have least of God in their hearts, have most of his name interposed in their common talk. If the Mahometans find a piece of paper, they take it up, and put it in the hole of a wall; because the name of God may be written on it. Alas! if paper were put in the holes of walls, at every time the name of God is profaned among Christians, the holes of the walls would soon be full. It is profaned,

(1.) In exclamations, where the holy name is interposed at any little thing untender persons wonder at, are vexed about, or seem to fear. Hence some cry, O God! O Lord! some, God bless us, save us, guide us, forgive us! Christ or Lord have a care of us; God be wi' you; which is an ordinary salutation. What! (may some say) may we not pray to God to bless us, and be with our neighbours, *&c.?* *Ans.* Yes, indeed; but then ye should use them in a praying manner, with holy reverence, answerable affections, faith in the blood of Christ as praying indeed. Of which we have an example, Ruth. ii. 4. "And behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem and said unto the reapers, The Lord be with you: and they answered him, The Lord bless thee." But to prostitute that name to give a vent to your foolish passions, to use these things with a rashness and irreverence, is profane. God's blessing, *&c.* are matters of greatest weight; and those who are most concerned for them, will not seek them that way.

(2.) In permissions; as, *Let him do it in God's name.* I know no face can be put on this as it is used in common talk, but a profanation of that holy name. And I dare say, it is not used by those who walk up and down in the name of the Lord, and that remember his name is dreadful.

(3.) In obsecrations or entreaties; as, For God's sake, For God's love, &c. For Christ's sake, &c. No doubt, according to the scripture, these things may be used in weighty matters, so it be with due reverence; but in trifles it is profane. Let them be things that concern one's life and salvation, that ye will entreat for that way; and when ye do it, let it appear you have the awe of God on your spirits. But interpose not the holy name at every trifle.

(4.) In appeals to God in light matters; matters of no seriousness; as, *God knows.* The omniscience of God is a matter of great importance, and his people may take the comfort of it under reproaches, which otherwise they cannot fully clear themselves of be-

fore the world. But lightly to appeal to that Judge, is the way to bring wrath on the appellant. The serious thoughts of God's knowledge, may make the best to tremble; and strike such dread on the worst, as they may not make a light matter of it. We find indeed such an appeal made by the apostle, 2 Cor. xii. 3. but it was in a serious weighty affair, which none knew but God. But what is that to a profane use of it in trifles, which perhaps many do know?

3. All asseverations of the nature of oaths; as, *As I am a Christian, have a soul to be saved.* That these are akin to oaths, is evident from that form of an oath used by God himself, *As I live, saith the Lord:* and therefore they are not to be used in common conversation. And as oaths they imply an imprecation, *viz.* Let me not be reckoned a Christian, Let me not have a soul to be saved. And none will therefore, in common conversation use them, who have a due value for Christianity, and the salvation of their souls.

4. Cursing, whereby one imprecates evil on himself or others, whether absolutely or conditionally, if they do not so and so. And the more solemn and deliberate it is, it is the worse. This is one of the characters of a wicked man, Psal. x. 7. "His mouth is full of cursing." There are three ways whereby men utter this language of hell.

(1.) Sometimes God is expressly invoked in the curse. Thus profane men will invoke God to damn them, confound them, or curse themselves or others. This speaks a profane contempt of God, a defiance of his curse and eternal wrath: and surely their damnation, as it will be just, so it will be dreadful, and the more cutting to their consciences through eternity, that they have prayed for it.

(2.) Sometimes the name of God is suppressed, but the curse belched out. So some will wish that themselves or others may break their neck, that an ill chance, wo, or shame may light on them. These are curses indeed, wherein though the name of God is suppressed, yet he is called to execute their wicked wishes against themselves or others, forasmuch as these must be the effects of divine providence, if they be all.

(3.) Sometimes the devil is invoked in the curse. And thus many are found oftener praying to the devil to take themselves or others, than to God to save them. They cannot deny a thing, but the name of the devil must be in it. And the devil has several names given him to serve this purpose, as *Foul, Fiend,* &c.

Thus I have raked in this dunghill for your warning and reformation; and by what is said ye may judge of other things of this nature, which I have not named. It is a plain rule against all these, *Let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay.* I proceed to

DOCT. ult. Profane swearing, and the like ungodly speeches akin thereto, will make the guilty fall under the fearful judgment of God. So the third commandment threatens.

The import of this, we may take up in the following things.

1. However lightly men look on these, and overlook them, God writes them down guilty upon every such profane speech. There is a book of remembrance written with God, whereby none of them all shall be lost. Men's Judge is their witness in these, as in other things; and if they must fall under condemnation for them, surely they are remembered. *For*, says our Lord, *by thy words thou shalt be condemned*, Matth. xii. 37.

2. God will call men to a reckoning for them sooner or later. Though they may now pass without a challenge, the time will come that they will get deep challenges for them, either in mercy or in wrath. Their words that they think light of now, shall sometime lie like a talent of lead on their consciences, and pierce them like swords, Matth. xii. 36. "Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment." Jude, 16.

3. If ever they get the pardon of them, they shall be made to condemn themselves for them, and be cut to the heart for the sin and scandal of them, and go with a bowed down back on account of that profanation of the holy name, and their ungodly speeches of the nature of oaths, 1 Tim. i. 13.

4. *Lastly*, If men get not the pardon of them by faith, if they repent not of them, and reform, they shall fall under eternal condemnation by the weight of the guilt of them, Matth. xii. 37. forecited.

I conclude with an use of exhortation.

I exhort you to purify and keep clean your speech, that *your yea may be yea, and your nay, nay*; and that you will beware of profane swearing by God or the creatures, all cursing, light and irreverent use of the holy name, and all speeches whatsoever of the nature of profane swearing. For motives, consider,

1. God is a God of glorious majesty, infinitely above us and all creatures in his perfections: therefore he is to be feared by us; Job xxv. 2. "Dominion and fear are with him. Psal. lxxxix. 7. God is greatly to be feared,—and to be had in reverence." His name is reverend and holy; and what he has made secret, it is high presumption in us to profane, Mal. i. 14. *My name is dreadful*, says he. The angels adore it, the devils tremble at it; and shall only men trample it under foot without fear? He has fenced about the honour of his name with an awful hedge, Deut. xxviii. 58, 59, "If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that thou mayst fear this glorious and fearful name, the

Lord thy God; then the Lord will make thy plagues wonderful, and the plagues of thy seed, even great plagues, and of long continuance, and sore sicknesses, and of long continuance." Let this terror make men afraid to break over this hedge.

2. Ye are God's debtors for the use of your tongue, and it is your glory that ye can speak with it. Turn it not against him who gave it you, by your ungodly speeches. He gave you a faculty of speaking for his own glory and your comfort: he might have prevented your swearing, cursing, &c. by causing you to have been born dumb. And yet it is in his hand when he will, to take the use of your tongue from you; and so to lay the swearing tongue even before death lay it.

3. This is a sin that debaucheth the conscience in a particular manner, razing out of it any tolerable reverence of God. It is hard to say, that it is the spot of God's children, Psal. cxxxix. 20. Many otherwise loose men have had a horror of, the natural conscience startling at that sin to which there is so very little temptation. But those who are once engaged in a course of it, seldom get it laid aside: so that whereas many who are otherwise very extravagant in their youth, afterwards take up themselves; it is often seen that this grows grayheaded with those who have addicted themselves to it. The custom in it takes away the sense of it, so that it becomes in a manner natural to them: and hence it comes out with them, ere ever they are aware, their tongue being so set on swearing or cursing run, that it outruns the mind. A sad evidence of a hardened heart and seared conscience.

4. I observed before, that it was devilish sin. I shall here add, that it is in a peculiar manner hellish. There are many sins which this life will put an end to; there will be no gluttony, drunkenness, uncleanness, &c. in hell: but will there be no profaning of the holy name nor cursing there? Yea, there will; that is a sin that will go along with the cursed company to the pit, and will be carried to a height, and carried on there, Rev. xvi. 21. And an eternity will be long enough to give men their fill of such speech. In the nature of some sins there is something pleasant to the corrupt nature, which being mixed with the poisonous cup, makes sinners greedily drink it off: but cursing and swearing are in their nature malicious, and can afford no pleasure even to corrupt nature, unless it arise from the opening of the mouth against the heavens, and natively come from a heart rankled and fretted, which will be the lot of sinners signally in hell, where they will weep, roar, gnash their teeth, and blaspheme.

5. It is a sin that brings down wrath in a special manner,

(1.) On a land, Hos. iv. 1, 2, "The Lord hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land. By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood. Jer. v. 7, 9. How shall I pardon thee for this? thy children have forsaken me, and sworn by them that are no gods. Shall I not visit for these things? saith the Lord: and shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?" It is a burden to the Spirit of God, to the spirits of his people, and makes a land to mourn, Jer. xxiii. 10, "Because of swearing the land mourneth." And none needs doubt but the false swearing, the forswearing, and profane swearing in common converse, in this generation, will make Scotland mourn. How can a land miss a flame of wrath, in which are so many tongues set on fire of hell?

(2.) On families, to consume and root them out from the earth, Zech. v. 3, 4, "This is the curse that goeth forth over the face of the whole earth: for every one that stealeth, shall be cut off as on this side, according to it: and every one that sweareth, shall be cut off as on that side, according to it. I will bring it forth, saith the Lord of hosts, and it shall enter into the house of the thief, and into the house of him that sweareth falsely by my name: and it shall remain in the midst of his house, and shall consume it, with the timber thereof, and the stones thereof." It brings a curse that a house cannot long stand under. And therefore masters of families should take heed to themselves, and to children and servants addicted to this sin, as to those who would bring down the house about their ears. Many times things go wrong not for want of diligence, but there is a secret curse upon this and other sins that blasts them.

(3.) On the particular persons; on their bodies, Deut. xxviii. 58, 59, forecited. On their souls too. See the text. Will idle words ruin men for ever? how much more profane swearing and cursing words? Have pity on your own souls, and sacrifice them not to a wicked tongue. Remember the rich man in hell, whose tongue was tormented in that flame. Heavy judgments have been before the world inflicted on such persons, Psal. lxiv. 7—9, "God shall shoot at them with a arrow, suddenly shall they be wounded. So they shall make their own tongue to fall upon themselves: all that see them, shall flee away. And all men shall fear, and shall declare the work of God; for they shall wisely consider of his doing."

6. As it is a scandalous sin, so it is especially a scandal, *i. e.* a stumbling block, to the rising generation. It was heavy to Nehemiah, chap. xiii. 24, 25. but he soon saw where the blame lay. And is it not lamentable to hear young ones among us, as they begin to

speak, to begin to curse and swear; and as they grow in years, to grow in this hellish art? How do they learn it but from the elder people? They learn to curse and swear at those who learn them to speak, at their fathers and mothers, or profane servants, or young ones like themselves, who learn it at home. Thus these sinners transmit their sin from generation to generation; and when ye shall be dead and gone, the cursing and swearing set afoot by you shall remain and be going on; and consequently your guilt shall be increased after ye are away.

7. Your tongue shall either be for ever praising God in heaven, or blaspheming in hell. I beseech you soberly consider, whether going on in a course of cursing and swearing, you look likest to have the one or the other for your lot. Is it a preparation for heaven or for hell?

8. To forbear cursing, swearing, and profaning the name of God, is but a small attainment in religion. Some, by their education, who never yet had saving grace, have been kept free from these things. And the reforming thereof will but bring you out from among the number of the profane. If it is such a matter for you to reform in that point, which is but in the outward man; what way will ye come to reform the heart-lusts that belong to the inner man? But ye must have pure hearts and clean hands too, else ye will never see heaven.

9. *Lastly*, Consider the life and death of Jesus, both which were for glorifying that name, which ye profane. His speech was *verily, verily*, i. e. truly, truly. All his life-time he was blasphemed, and particularly by the thief on the cross, which was a part of his sufferings. Why will ye go on thus to crucify the Lord of glory afresh?

Now I shall endeavour to obviate some shifts, whereby sinners endeavour to sooth themselves, and ward off conviction and serious thoughts of reformation in this point.

1. These things are very common; and there are few that have not an use of some of them: therefore we need not think so much of them.

Ans. The more common the worse, as the diseases are which turn epidemic. God commands you to turn back from following the multitude, which are in conspiracy against him, trampling on his laws, Exod. xxiii. 2. And men must either cease to sin with the multitude, or perish with them, Matth. vii. 13; Rev. iii. 4. If it be ill with you, ye think it will be ill with many a one; and so it will. But it will be no comfort to go to hell with company, if we may believe the rich man there, Luke xvi. If men think that, going to hell by troops, they will be conquerors, and not sufferers, they will be wretchedly disappointed.

2. But several good people have an use of these things; and we find Peter cursed and swore.

Ans. Peter under a violent fit of temptation fell into that snare, and with the same breath denied his part in Christ: but he repented bitterly for it, and reformed. Do ye so too, and ye shall do well. There are many whom the world counts good people, whom God never counted so. You may see how the heart-searching God reckons in this case, Psal. cxxxix. 20. "They speak against thee wickedly, and thine enemies take thy name in vain." Psal. x. 7. *His mouth is full of cursing.* If there be any such good people, ye have much to reckon for that pick out their blemishes, and follow them; and they also have much to account for, who lay a stumbling-block before the blind. But it is God's word, and not men's practice, that is the rule of our life, and that we will be judged by, 1 Cor. xi. 1. *Be ye followers of me,* says the apostle, *even as I also am of Christ.*

3. We have no ill in our minds, when we use these words; they just come out rashly.

Ans. Ill words are certainly the product of an ill heart, Matth. xii. 34; Mark vii. 21, 22. But alas! most men are strangers to the ill of their hearts, Isa. xliv. 20. They that murdered Christ's disciples, John xvi. and Saul, 1 Sam. xv. when he spared Agag, and the cattle of the Amalekites, might have pretended they had no ill in their minds; yet the former were murderers, and the latter a rebel to God. It is God's law, and not men's designs, that is the rule of their words and actions. The tongue is an unruly member, and they that speak rashly with it, cannot speak well. Ye are obliged to watch it, and bridle it. This was David's practice, Psal. xxxix. 1. "I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me." Your rashness is your sin, and one sin will not excuse another. Good Moses was kept out of Canaan for his rash speaking, Psal. cvi. 31, 32. They spoke rashly who made excuses for not coming to the marriage of the King's son, Luke xiv.; and see the effect of it, ver. 24. *I say unto you, that none of those men which were bidden, shall taste of my supper.* Let the awe of God be on your hearts, and it will prevent that rashness.

4. But what matter of the devil's name how it be used? sure it is not holy.

Ans. He is the enemy of God, and our soul's enemy; and an intercommuned spirit, whom we are not allowed to speak to without a special call. How then dare men adventure to call on him to do this or that, as to take themselves or others? and in their words to give things to him, as if it were a bit, as *Devil a bit, Fiend a bit?*

It is known this is the very thing he seeks from his drudges, that they call him to do this or that for them; and that they offer him something, be it ever so little. But the love and fear of God would teach you, that "Their sorrows shall be multiplied, that hasten after another god; and that you should not take up their names into your lips," Psal. xvi. 4.

5. Well, it is but seldom I fall into these things.

Ans. Now and then sinning will cost everlasting destruction, if repentance prevent it not. You are allowed no time for these things, but they are forbidden you always. But a common swearer getting grace to repent and reform, is in the way of salvation, while the man that sees no need of repentance, because he is but seldom guilty, will perish. Stop however in time, lest your seldom turned to ordinary, be turned to a confirmed custom.

6. But all these things are but words, and we hope God will not be so severe for words.

Ans. It is a sad hope that is kept up over the belly of God's truth. Here is God's word, Matth. xii. 37. *By thy words thou shalt be condemned.* Must not either God's word or your hope fall then? Read the doom of such good hopers, Deut. xxix. 19, 20. "And it come to pass, when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst: the Lord will not spare him, but then the anger of the Lord, and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the Lord shall blot out his name from under heaven." And that ye may assure yourselves, God will be as severe for these things, as it is said of him from the word, see Zech. v. 2, 3. "And he said unto me, What seest thou? And I answered, I see a flying roll; the length thereof is twenty cubits, and the breadth thereof ten cubits. Then said he unto me, This is the curse that goeth forth over the face of the whole earth: for every one that stealeth, shall be cut off as on this side, according to it; and every one that sweareth, shall be cut off as on that side, according to it." Compare 1 Kings vi. 3.

7. I neither curse nor swear, but when I am provoked.

Ans. (1.) Where is your patience, in which ye are called to possess your souls? Luke xxi. 19. The proper season of exercising it is when ye are provoked. Will it excuse your cursing and swearing, that in the first place ye cast off patience? (2.) I hope it is not God who provokes you, is it? Will a man tear his own flesh, or stab his dearest friend to the heart, because an enemy provokes him? Yet you will set your mouths against the heavens, because a

fellow-worm disobliges you. However, if men will curse and swear, being provoked, they may assure themselves that God will destroy them for it, being provoked with their cursing and swearing, Jer. v. 7, 9. forecited.—But flesh and blood is not able to abide the provocations I meet with. *Ans. Flesh and blood shall not inherit the kingdom of God.* They are flesh and blood as well as ye, that bear great provocations.

8. I have got a custom of it, and it is out with me ere ever I am aware.

Ans. The greater is your sin that you have a custom of it. You are like those, Jer. ix. 5, "They have taught their tongue to speak lies, and weary themselves to commit iniquity." Surely ye were not born cursing and swearing as breathing: but ye have learned it. Ye learned that custom at the instigation of the devil; unlearn it again at God's call. Is not that thief, that murderer, that has got a-custom of it, esteemed by you the worst of thieves and murderers? And are not you who have got a custom of cursing and swearing, the worst of cursers and swearers? How dreadful must your case be, and how like the devil, to whom it is become just natural to profane the holy name! Look to it in time, for it is next door to a desperate case. Some have died cursing and swearing, the thief on the cross blaspheming, others roaring out horrid oaths. Now what do ye know but ye may die roving, without the exercise of your judgment? Would it be any thing strange, that ye who have a custom of cursing and swearing, should in that case go off the world, speaking according to your custom?

9. But it is no sooner out but I regret it, I repent of it.

Ans. But do ye reform it? Ye regret it; so did Pharaoh, so did Judas; but they mended not, till they were ended; and so I doubt many in hell this day are regretting what they did and spoke on earth. Ye repent of it but still ye go back with the dog to the vomit, and with the sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire. What repentance is that? Hearken to the call of God, Ezek. xviii. 30, 31, "Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord God: repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin. Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed, and make you a new heart, and a new spirit; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" It is a sad sign, that it has never been bitter enough to you to this day; and ye may even say with the drunkard, Prov. xiii. *ult.* "They have stricken me, and I was not sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not: when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again."

10. *Lastly*, I have often resolved against it, but I find I cannot help it.

Ans. It seems you have never struck at the root of it, the sin of your nature, Psal. xxxvi. 1. Ye have never gone about it in faith, Psal. cxli. 3. But, withal, the abstaining from profaning the holy name of God, by cursing and swearing, and reforming a custom of that, is but an act of moral discipline, not beyond the power of a natural man. I make no question, but a sixpence for every oath would at length carry you over that custom. But be it so, that you cannot help it: I ask you, whether or no you desire to have it helped? And so I close with some directions.

1. Go to Christ in the way of believing, that he may help it, 1 Tim. i. 13, 14. There is help in Christ for it: there is fulness of merit in him to remove the guilt of it, and of the Spirit to remove the power of it. He is lifted up on the pole of the gospel to be looked to for the justification of our persons, and sanctification of our natures. There is virtue in him for curing us of all our heart and life plauges, those running sores not excepted, which have spurned all other remedies. Mind the woman in the gospel, of whom it is said, Luke viii. 43, 44. "And a woman having an issue of blood twelve years, which had spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be healed of any, came behind him, and touched the border, of his garment: and immediately her issue of blood stanched." He is the great Physician, and heals all diseases of the soul, Psal. ciii. 3. No disease is the reproach of this Physician. He is by office Saviour of the world, and your Saviour, 1 John iv. 14. and he saves those who employ him from their sins, Matth. i. 21. And it is your following other methods of cure, and not going to Christ by faith for it, that makes that running sore in you seem incurable. For all other means but the blood and Spirit of Christ applied by faith serve but to skin over the sore, after which it is ready to break out again.

Quest. How should I make use of Christ in the way of believing for the remedy of this evil?

Ans. (1.) Believe that he is held forth and offered to you in the gospel with all his salvation, and particularly his salvation from that sin, Isa. xlv. 22. "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else." This is the constant voice of the gospel, Rev. xxii. 17. "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth, say, Come, and let him that is athirst, come: And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Jesus Christ crucified is by the appointment of God the great ordinance of heaven for the sanctification of sinners, and heal-

ing them of all spiritual plagues; being made of God unto them *sanctification*, 1 Cor. i. 30.

(2) Trust on him for his whole salvation, upon the ground of the divine faithfulness plighted in the promise. Believe that he will by his grace save you from all your guilt, and all your sin, and that in particular. This has the promise of salvation, Acts xvi. 31. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Not only kept out of hell hereafter, but immediately on your believing saved rom all your spiritual plagues whatsoever; so that the guilt of eternal wrath shall no more lie on you for them, nor the reigning power of them be any more unbroken. The ground of this confidence you have, John iii. 16. "Whosoever believeth in him, shall not perish, but have everlasting life." But this trust must be on him for all: for faith looks to Christ for his whole salvation.

(3.) Make use of the means of reformation in the faith of the promise, 2 Tim. ii. 1. "Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." The promise you have, Micah vii. 19. "He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us: he will subdue our iniquities: and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea." To use the means without taking along the faith of the promise is atheistical: To pretend to believe the promise without care of using the means is presumptuous. Now the proper means may be these.

2. Labour to impress your hearts deeply with a sense of the ill of these things. You have heard much about them. Be so just to your own souls as to consider the matter impartially. Weigh your profanations of the holy name, &c. in the balance of the word. They will never rightly reform that see not the ugly nature of their sin.

3. Devote your hearts, lips, and lives to the Lord, 1 Cor. vi. *ult.* Learn to use your tongues for God, and his honour in the world: for they who use them not for him, can hardly miss to use them against them. There is no neutrality in that case.

4 Labour to get your hearts possessed habitually with dread and reverence of the majesty of God; and with a due value for your own souls, and love to your neighbour. The former will keep you from profane swearing, &c.; and the latter from cursing yourselves or others.

5. Watch and pray. Keep a guard over your tongues, and lift up your hearts to the Lord, in the language of David, Psal. cxli. 3. "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth, keep the door of my lips." Be not rash to speak, but consider before hand.

6. *Lastly*, Set about the reformation of your whole life at once. Put all the idols to the door at once, as thieves and robbers, else those remaining will open the door to those which ye put out. Guard against passion, be meek and calm.

THE

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERS

OF

TRUE BELIEVERS.

IV. IN RELATION TO THEIR MEEKNESS, AS AN EVIDENCE OF GREAT UNDERSTANDING, AND THE FOLLY OF PASSIONATENESS.*

PROVERBS xiv. 29.

He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding: but he that is hasty of spirit, exalteth folly.

THERE is a great affinity betwixt sinful anger, and cursing, swearing, profanation of the name of God. It is the mother, and they are the daughters ordinarily; though in all it does not bring them forth, yet they are hardly to be found with a meek and quiet spirit.

The scope of these words is to beat down sinful anger, a common evil, producing much mischief. And in them,

1. There is the excellency of meekness. Meekness is the bridle of anger or wrath; the meek man is *slow to* [Heb. *of*] *wrath*. He is one that does not soon take offence, and keeps such a command over his passion, that it does not unreasonably and violently break out, breaking up as it were the doors of his soul and flying forth and raging. The excellency of this is, that such a one is an understanding man, *of great understanding*. Worldly men, whose pride and passion is to them instead of law and reason, count such a one a poor mean-spirited, silly man, that does not understand himself; for that when he receives an injury, he does not presently take fire and resent it: but as the understanding, so the wisdom of the world is foolishness with God; and the world's fool is God's wise man.

2. The mischief of passionateness, and the evil thereof. The passionate man is *hasty of spirit;* his passion runs before his reason. The original calls him *short*, or *cutted of spirit*. He is so far from being slow to wrath, that his spirit finds a short way to it. His fiery spirit is as tinder to every spark of provocation, and at one

* This subject was handled at Ettrick in October, 1724.

step is forward in the midst of wrath or sinful anger. The ill of this is that he *exalts*, or *lifts up his own folly* like a standard, making it visible to all about him. He thinks by that means to proclaim his worth, and make others stand in awe of him: but in very deed he proclaims his folly, that is, his sinfulness, corruption, naughtiness, and wickedness.

So here anger is held forth as a passion dangerous and difficult to manage, which the wise will therefore be loath to venture into, and when they are in, will labour to keep a bridle upon; but fools rashly venture on, and let loose the bridle to it, and in it.

The text gives a foundation for the following doctrines.

Doct. I. The man that is slow of wrath or anger, shews great wisdom and understanding in his meek and peaceable disposition and deportment.

Doct. II. The passionate man proclaims his folly and naughtiness in his unbridled passion and sinful anger.

I shall handle each doctrine in order.

Doct. I. The man that is slow of wrath or anger, shews great wisdom and understanding in his meek and peaceable disposition and deportment.

In discoursing from this doctrine, I shall,

I. Consider the nature of wrath or anger in general.

II. Shew what it is to be slow of wrath.

III. In what respects he that is slow of wrath is of great understanding.

IV. Make some improvement.

I. I am to consider the nature of wrath or anger in general. Anger or wrath is a passion which is not of itself sinful, but is either good or ill as it is regulated: and so it differs from fretting, murmuring, and envy, which can never be good or allowable in any case. This is evident from the scripture's attributing anger or wrath to God. We find it in Christ, Mark iii. 5. *He looked round about him with anger.* So that without question there is an allowable and holy anger. Such was that of Moses, of whom it is said, that, on his descent from the mountain, when he saw the calf and the dancing, *his anger waxed hot*, Exod. xxiii. 26. And this is our duty, Eph. iv. 26. *Be ye angry, and sin not.* But such is the corruption of man's nature, that when this passion riseth in his breast, it is exceedingly hard to keep it within bounds, and rarely is it that it overflows not the banks. Therefore the apostle exhorts, that *all wrath and anger be put away*, Eph. iv. 31.

Anger is like a fire, that is a good servant, but an ill master. It is a servant to the meek, but a master to the passionate. The passion of anger is like wind to the ship: so is it to the soul called to steer its course to Immanuel's land.

1. If there be a dead calm, and the winds blow not at all, or very weakly, the ship does not make way. And if men be so stupid, indolent, and unconcerned, that their spirits will not stir in them, whatever dishonour they see done to God, these are standing still in the way to heaven. And many such there be, who are all fire in their own matters, but in those of God, their hearts are dead like a stone. And if their hearts on such occasions stir in them, but very weakly, they are making but little progress. Such was the case of Eli: *His sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not*, 1 Sam. iii. 13. It was not so with Paul: for *his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city* [Athens] *wholly given to idolatry*, Acts xvii. 16.

2. If the wind is brisk enough but yet is contrary, the ship will at best have much ado with it, and may be driven into a shore which the crew desired not to see. So if men's anger be in itself sinful, if their anger burn against what is good and just, against their own mercy, their duty, such things or persons as are for their real good, as the Jews' wrath was against Christ, his apostles, and their doctrine; such anger cannot fail of an unhappy event, driving the soul into much sin, and driving at length into destruction, if that wind do not turn, and they change their course. This was the case of the Jews, of whom the apostle says, 1 Thess. ii. 15, 16, "Who hath killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men: forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles, that they might be saved, to fill up their sins alway; for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost."

3. Though the wind be not contrary, yet if it be too impetuous and violent, it may dash the ship on rocks, and split it. So though men's anger may have a just ground, yet if it prove excessive and boisterous, it may run men headlong into great mischiefs, to the dishonour of God, and ruin of themselves and others. And therefore Jacob thus censures that of Simeon and Levi, Gen. xlix. 7. "Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel: I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel." Oft-times reason lets in anger into one's breast; but then anger turns out reason to the door, and carries on all precipitantly without reason or discretion: like one that brings in a coal to his hearth, because of the cold, but unwarily lets it fall on tow, which sets the house on fire.

The ingredients of anger are these following.

1. A commotion or trouble of the spirit, which ariseth from an apprehension of an injury. The injury apprehended strikes on men's spirit, and disturbs its repose. And many times the sinfulness of it riseth here, that there is an injury apprehended where there is none, or it is apprehended to be greater than it really is. In both cases it is rash anger; hence our Lord says, Matth. v. 22. "Whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire." But however it is, as to the cause of it, it is according to its name an anger, vexation or trouble of spirit, in its nature, which a wise man will be loath to admit without a good cause, 2 Pet. ii. 7.

2. Hatred, which is bent against the injury apprehended, that they cannot think on it but with detestation. And in respect of this anger is called indignation. And if the injury be real, and consequently a sinful thing, and the hatred and indignation be confined to it, the anger in that case is laudable, so that it keep due proportion with the offence, 2 Cor. vi. 11. But here again the sinfulness of anger riseth, while like a flood-water it does not only fill the channel, but overflows the banks; the hatred being not only directed against our neighbour's sin and offence, but his person, whom we are obliged to love as ourselves, notwithstanding of his real or apprehended injuries to us, Matth. v. 44.

3. Grief, for whosoever is angry is grieved too, Mark iii. 5. And this ariseth from the conceived injury too which is hated. But the grief is on the account of the party, or parties injured; and in lawful anger it is impartial, and goes as broad as the injury goes: as in our Lord's anger, he was "grieved for the hardness of their hearts." He was grieved for it as an injury to his Father, to himself, and to their own souls. And here is another joint, at which our anger is often distorted, and becomes sinful. The grief the angry man has, often looks only to himself as slighted, despised, and wronged; upon that his anger feeds: but he has no regard to the dishonour of God, nor to the wrong done to the injurer's own soul, by the injury to us.

4. A desire of the vindication of the right and honour of the injured. And from this appetite or desire it hath one of its names in the New Testament, ORGE. And this desire is allowable as far as it seeks what only in a way of justice and equity is necessary to vindicate the right and honour of the injured, and withal seeks it in an orderly and allowable way. The meek desire that in their anger; but they commit it to God to whom it belongs. But here again our

nger usually becomes sinful; partly, while that desire respects only their own right and honour, and we have no concern for the vindication of the honour of God and our neighbour; partly, while men are bent on revenge, which is measured not by the rule of moderation, justice, and equity, but by the satisfying of an exorbitant passion; and partly, while men are by it carried to avenge themselves, while yet they have no lawful power, Rom. xii. 19. whence come scoldings, quarrelings, beatings, and fightings.

Thus ye may see that anger is a passion uneasy to one's self, compounded of bitter ingredients and uneasy passions; in which one walks on slippery ground, where he is apt to fall headlong.

II. I come now to shew what it is to be slow of wrath. It imports these three things.

1. Being slow to take up anger in one's own cause. The wise man is not soon angry, Prov. xiv. 17. It is wisdom indeed to be very tender of God's honour, but to be more indifferent about our own personal interests, as Moses was. But the world's way is the reverse of this; they are lions in their own cause, but lambs in the matters of God. However, in all cases the wise are not rash with their anger; they consider matters duly, put a charitable construction on actions that will bear one, and put up many offences, covering them with a mantle of love.

2. Managing it warily when it is taken up, being guided by the light of reason, and not by the fire of passion. This is to possess themselves, and not to be turned out of the possession of themselves by their passion, Luke xxi. 19. They find themselves on slippery ground, and therefore are slow to their motions: they see their danger, and therefore do the rather watch, lest they be precipitated into what will afterward bring them nothing but remorse.

3. Being easy to lay it down, Eph. iv. 26, 27; easy to forgive and forget injuries, Matth. xviii. 22. The more slow that anger burns, it is the easier to quench, it doth the easier die out. Thus he who has the rule over his own spirit, as he manageth his anger regularly while there is need for it, he shuts it out when there is no more use for it.

III. I proceed to shew in what respects he that is slow of wrath is of great understanding. Such a one thereby shews, that he does well understand,

1. His duty to God his sovereign Lord, Eccl. v. 2. If men understood that, they would not be so ready to take fire on every temptation. If they considered that God is the Judge of all and their Judge, to whom belongs vengeance; that he has by his command enjoined them patience, long-suffering, and forbearance; and

that he is slow of wrath towards themselves, and that they are obliged to be followers of God; they would see it their duty to be slow to anger.

2. Himself. The passionate man thinks he will shew those that offend him, that he understands himself very well. But our text shews, that he hangs out a sign at his own door to tell that a fool dwells within, one who does not understand himself. If you saw one girt about with bags of powder run in among sparks, you would say he did not understand himself. He that is truly wise understands himself to have a mass of corruption within him, to be of like passions with others, that it is very hard for him to be angry and not sin, to bridle his passion sufficiently if once it get place; and therefore he is slow to wrath, as one handles glasses tenderly and warily, that knows the nature of them.

3. Satan's diligence and malice against him, who will not lose a fair opportunity for tripping up his heels. He knows full well, that that evil spirit will blow the coal that he has cast in, if so he may bring it to a flame, and then say, *Aha, I am warm*, Eph. iv. 26, 27. He understands that Satan seeks first to trouble the waters, and then to fish in the muddy flood. The passionate fool sees nothing of this, till once he finds himself carried headlong, and afterwards comes to himself.

4. His real interest; that to give up himself to his passion is to bring damage to himself, to let in an enemy that makes havock of soul and body at once. To see inhabitants breaking down their city, and dismantling it of its walls, whereby they should be defended from their enemies, we would say, they understood not their own interest. As little does the man that is hasty to wrath hasty in it, and slow at laying it down. He has no rule over his own spirit, Prov. xxv. *ult.* His passion masters his reason, and his grace too, if he have any: and so the good that is in may go out, and ill may come in.

5. Human nature, and what metal fallen Adam's sons and daughters are of. He is not surprised to meet with offences among mankind, more than with midges flying about him in the summer, or frost and snow pinching him in the winter. For as that is the nature of the seasons, so the other is the nature of sinful mankind. He considers that there is not one among them all to cast a stone at another: that as some offend him, he offends others too; and therefore since he needs forbearance and forgiveness, he will give it too.

I come now to improve this subject; and that in a use of exhortation.

Be slow of wrath, slow to take up anger, wary in managing you

spirits when angry, and ready to lay it down. For motives, consider,

1. It is a heaven-like disposition, it is a God-like and Christ-like temper, Joel ii. 13, "God is gracious and merciful, slow to anger. Matt. xi. 29, I am meek and lowly in heart," says Christ. And should we follow the dictates and way of the wicked world, which puts darkness for light? If we bear the name of Christians, let us follow the example of Christ.

2. The comfort of society depends on it, Col. iii. 13. O! what disorder does the want of this breed among neighbours, and in families! One fires his train, another catches the fire as flax or tow would do, and then the flame goes up; and Satan finds his account in it.

3. It is necessary for a man's own comfort. The hasty man will never want wo, while he lives in a sinful world. And what a pity is it that our peace and quiet should lie at the mercy of every one who has the ill disposition to give us a provocation? The meek man will maintain his quiet over the belly of these, and will be happy in bearing calmly the provocation that others are so unhappy as to give.

4. It is necessary to keep both one's self and others from the snare of sin. We are to pray, *Lead us not into temptation.* This is a necessary mean thereto, Prov. xv. 18, "A wrathful man stirreth up strife: but he that is slow to anger appeaseth strife." Compare Matth. v. 2, *Blessed are the peace-makers.* He that is slow to anger keeps the bridle over his own passion, he lays in no fuel to another's, and so appeaseth strife, as the coal goes out when left alone on the hearth.

5. Consider the authority of God binding it on us, Jam. i. 19, *Let every man be—slow to wrath.* This is backed by the authority and example of the Mediator, who cast us a copy for our imitation. Matth. xi. 29, *I am meek and lowly in heart.* Let this double tie serve to bind down our spirits when they begin to swell sinfully.

6. What need we have of the Lord's being slow to anger towards us, Lam. iii. 22, 23, "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness." There is no body so frequent, so unreasonable in their provocations to us as we towards him. What should come of us, if Heaven should fire against us at every provocation? We should be made to cry as those unreasonably did, Numb. xvii. 12, 13, "Behold, we die, we perish, we all perish. Whosoever cometh any thing near unto the tabernacle of the Lord, shall die: Shall we be consumed with dying?" What we need for ourselves, let us use to others.

7. *Lastly*, The want of it will provoke the Lord to anger against us. Remember the servant in the parable, Matth. xviii. 33, 34, "Shouldst not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him." God is almighty, able to revenge every disobedience; yet is *slow to anger*, Nah. i. 3. We are weak, and often can do no more than show ill-will. How then can it miss to provoke the Lord against us?

But here it is necessary to caution against sinful slackness to anger, whereby the necessary duties of justice and charity come to be omitted. It has indeed a semblance to meekness and slowness to wrath: but it is really the rock on the right hand of them, as passion is the rock on the left; and upon the one as well as the other the ship of the soul may be damaged, if it is not dashed in pieces. The difference between this slowness and sinful slackness is, that the former proceeds from true wisdom, as in the text, *viz.* spiritual and heavenly wisdom, wrought in men by the Spirit, through the word, Jam. iii. 17, the latter from a mere natural softness of temper which we call good humour, or from carnal wisdom, in both which the principle, manner, and end of the action are all confined within the circle of self, and so cannot be acceptable to God, as they are not the product of his sanctifying Spirit. And hence it is that the effect of them is often, as in this case, quite contrary to the rule of the word; which the effect of grace and spiritual wisdom can never be, Gal. v. 22, 23.

Now, the evil of this slackness lies in its causing a criminal omission of that duty which we owe to God, and to our neighbour, either by the tie of justice or charity. Such was the sinful slackness of Gallio, Acts xviii. 17, of the church of Corinth in not casting out the incestuous person, 1 Cor. v. with 2 Cor. vii. 11, and of Eli in not restraining is sons.

We have need to take heed how we steer our course then, keeping off sinful passion on the one hand, and sinful slackness on the other, studying a Christian meekness, a gracious slowness of wrath, whereof the new nature is the principle, the word, the rule and reason, the glory of God the chief end, and faith the mean by which we come to exercise it. All other meekness and slowness of wrath, will be found but spurious meekness and slowness, or sinful slackness.

Therefore let us look to Christ for the sanctifying of our nature, the extinguishing of the hellish fire of them by his Spirit working like water; let us entertain habitual impressions of the majesty of God, the spirituality of the law, and our own danger, on our spirits;

and labour to exercise this slowness to wrath, depending on Jesus as the head of influences for strength.

Doct. II. The passionate man proclaims his folly and naughtiness in his unbridled passion and sinful anger.

In discoursing from this doctrine, I shall,

I. Consider the nature of passion or sinful anger.

II. Shew how the passionate man proclaims his folly.

III. Make application.

I. I shall consider the nature of passion or sinful anger. And that we may understand it, let us view,

1. The causes of it.

2. The kinds of it.

3. The effects of it.

First, Let us view the causes constituting anger, sinful anger. Anger then is sinful anger and passion.

1. When it riseth without a just ground, having no cause for it assigned by grace or right reason as just. Hence our Lord speaks of one's being *angry without a cause*, Matth. v. 22. That is either, (1.) without any cause at all. The rush grows not without mire, nor the flag without water. But the heart of man can produce anger without any cause given him. There is a certain sourness of spirit that sometimes sits down on men, whereby they are angry while they know not wherefore. A humbling instance of the corruption of nature. (2.) Vainly, upon some light and trifling occasion, unworthy of such notice. There is no just cause for it; but the judgment is weak and yielding, and so gives way to passion.

But, O! how often do terrible flames arise from such trifling sparks, and the waters which at the beginning would hardly wet one's foot, or might easily be stept over, come through this rash anger to overflow even to the neck? Prov. xvii. 14, "The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water: therefore leave off contention, before it be meddled with."

2. When it keeps no due proportion with the offence, but in its degree quite exceeds the measure of the injury received, as in the case of Simeon and Levi respecting the Shechemites, Gen. xlix. 7. forecited, and that of David with regard to his design against Nabal, 1 Sam. xxv. 34. compare ver. 32, 33. It must needs be sinful anger, that turns men so far out of themselves, as to turn about their cart-wheel on the cumin, which might be beat out with a rod. Men need to take good heed lest they exceed; for when the smoke of passion rises, men see injuries as in a magnifying glass; and being once set on the passionate run, are apt to pursue beyond bounds.

3. When it is not directed to the honour of God, and the destruction of sin; but is confined within the cursed circle of self, Prov. xxi. 24, "Proud and haughty scorner is his name, who dealeth in proud wrath." God is dishonoured, as well as the man is wronged: but the passionate man has no concern for the former, but his concern is swallowed up in the latter. So it is a fire lighting on others, just to make them sacrifices to the pride and arrogance of a lofty heart, which thinks nothing too much for itself, Prov. xxviii. 25.

4. When it makes no due difference between the offender and the offence, but gives both one measure. It was the corrupt divinity of the Pharisees in Christ's time, Matth. v. 43. "Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy." But Christ, who never bade us love but hate offences, and acts of enmity, will have us nevertheless to love the persons even of offenders and our enemies, ver. 44. thereby showing that we in our anger make a great difference betwixt the offender and the offence. But alas! how little is this regarded, but the passion hand over head treats the offender and the offence alike, till they like the one no better than the other.

5. When the effects of it are sinful. If the fruits be sinful, the tree they grow on must be so, for the tree is known by its fruit. The effects of holy anger are just and good: but when anger puts a man so far out of himself, that it unfits him for his duty, or drives him on to revenge, or breaks out in clamour and evil speaking, and the like; it is easy to see that that fire is not from the altar, but, from another quarter. Moses himself had a fit of it, Psal. cvi. 33. "They provoked his spirit, so that he spake unadvisedly with his lips." But passion is never a whit the better of that, but the more to be feared, as a potent enemy which mastered so much meekness for a time as Moses was possessed of.

6. *Lastly*, When it is kept up and continued beyond due time, contrary to the apostle's counsel, Eph. iv. 26. *Let not the sun go down upon your wrath.* The keeping up of sinful anger is a double sin. It is sinful to admit it, it is more so to keep it up, and refuse to let it fall. It is not to be thought, that it is lawful to keep it up till the sun go down; for what is sinful in its rise, must be more so in its countenance. But the meaning is in these two things, (1.) As the sun with his scorching heat hastens to go down, like one running a race, Psal. xix. 5. so should we lay by our passion, which comes ordinarily far sooner to a height with us. (2.) As the setting sun bringing on the night, calls men to cast off their clothes, and so compose themselves to rest; so should we timely put off this part of the old man, and get our spirits composed. And particularly we ought not to lie down with it; for whereas the daylight affords a

variety of objects, that may serve to divert the force of passion, the darkness of the night hides all these, and leaves the fiery spirit to feed on that allenary, which raised it. So it gets leave to range through the several methods of revenge, Psal. xxxiv. 4.

Secondly, Let us view the kinds of sinful anger. In general, anger is twofold.

1. There is an anger essentially sinful, sinful in itself. And that is where there is no just ground of anger. Such was Jonah's anger at the withering of the gourd, and Saul's anger against the priests whom he murdered. The worst anger of this kind is, where that inflames anger that should be entertained with love and esteem. Such was Saul's anger against David: he was angry with him, just because he behaved himself well, and God prospered him. See Psal. cix. 3—5. Men may sin, in their anger at others for their sin: but to be angry at one for their duty, there can be no good in that. This kind of anger is like a water that has quite left it channel, or like fire in the thatch of a house, where it should never be.

2. There is an anger accidentally sinful: and that is, where there is indeed just ground for it, but it is ill managed, either by not keeping proportion with the offence, or not directing it to the honour of God, &c. Such was Moses' anger against the Israelites, and David's against Nabal: and the more of this is in it, and the more violent, the worse is the anger, and the more hellish; as Simeon and Levi's anger against the Shechemites. This is like a water which is indeed in its channel, but withal it is without it too; or like a fire which is indeed on the hearth, but withal coals of it scattered up and down the house. More particularly, there is,

1. A close sullen anger, called, Eph. iv. 31. *bitterness*, which is a fire that burns within the breast, with little noise. It is kept within, and makes one go with a bitter heart, and full of gall, a burden to himself and others till it be digested. It has more of discontent than revenge; and often carries not to actual revenge, either because they cannot, or for certain reasons will not. So it is very lingering, like a fire that has little vent. There is much of this in the world, which eats out the comfort of society, and men's own comfort. This is it that makes many go champing their own bridle, and gnawing on their own liver, and tinctures all their words and looks, as in the jaundice the overflowing gall colours the skin. And the nearer the relation is, it is the more dangerous; hence is that exhortation, Col. iii. 19. "Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them."

2. An open and impetuous anger, called their *wrath*, which is too violent to hold long. The hot spirit keeps it not in, as in the for-

mer case; but it breaks forth like a thunder-shower, overflowing. It is a most dangerous thing, apt to precipitate men into such indecencies and wickednesses, that if they were themselves, they would be ready to say, *Am I a dog that I should do these things?* But the smoke of the passion strikes them blind while it lasts; for it is in effect a short madness. Men are apt to think little of this, unreasonably taking it for bravery of spirit. Prov. xxv. *ult.* and because it is soon over, and they rue it: but it leavens the whole man, it is fire set to the devil's train; and oft-times that is done in it, which it is too late to rue.

3. There is a pursuing implacable wrath, called there, *anger;* which is set upon revenge so, that they will never lay down their anger till they be revenged to their own satisfaction. This is not kept so close as the first kind, nor is it carried so precipitantly as the second; but is more open than the first, more deliberate than the second, and so is the more devilish. This is to be mad with reason, and may well be called malicious anger, and is at the utmost remove from the spirit of Christianity. The apostle calls it a *giving place to the devil*, Eph. iv. 27. In other kinds of anger the devil takes place; in this they give him place.

Again, more particularly, there may be observed a fourfold anger.

1. Anger that is long a-taking up, and is soon laid down. This is the best sort of that ill thing; it speaks either a good natural temper, or great grace. It is like fire in wet wood, which is ill to kindle, and soon dies out. However, it is matter of humiliation, being sinful anger; and needs sprinkling of the blood of Christ, as well as the worst.

2. Anger soon taken up, and soon laid down. This is like fire in flint, flying out with a touch, but quickly vanish away. It is good it is soon laid down; as when one falls into a mire, the sooner out the better. But it is a great evil to be soon angry, Tit. i. 7. to sting like a wasp at a touch. It is very contrary to the nature of God, who is slow to anger; and makes people an easy prey to temptation, like a bunch of dry straw to a spark of fire, soon kindled and soon burned out.

3. Anger long a-taking up, and long a-laying down. This is like fire in iron, which is long a-heating, and long a-cooling too. It is good it is long a taking up, but very sinful that it is long a-laying down. Many value themselves, and are valued by others, upon their good temper, that are so long a-taking up anger, and can overlook so many offences; who are yet of such a disposition, that if once they be heartily angered, there is no gaining of them again. They are like fire in a moss, that is very ill to take fire, but when

once fired there is almost no quenching of it. And they, when once raised in anger, are implacable. This is most sinful and dangerous. Their name is in the black roll, Rom. i. 31. Satan has eminent place with such, Eph. iv. 26, 27. and they cannot walk in a course of communion with God, Matth. xviii. *ult.*

4. Anger soon taken up, and long a-laying down. This is like fire in oil or spirituous liquor, kindled with a touch, and burning vehemently, and continually while there is any thing to burn. This is the worst of all; it has all the mischief of the third kind, and that ill in it over and above, that it is soon taken up. It speaks a fearful height and power of sin, a person to be a perfect slave to his passion, who is guided neither by grace nor reason: and it is of all the most opposite to the spirit of Christianity.

Thirdly, Let us view the effects of sinful anger. I will hint at the general heads of them, as the particulars are too many.

1. It is mischievous to the body, a killing instrument to it, Job v. 2, *Wrath killeth the foolish man.* Therefore the scripture represents it as a sin against the sixth command, Matth. v. 21, 22. The transport of passion makes a man a tormentor to himself, inflame the heart, fire the eyes, render the visage fierce and pale, and loose as it were the very joints; and history affords several instances of persons who have been thrown into fevers, and died, by their passion. And it readily makes a sensible alteration on the body.

2. It fires the tongue in a particular manner, Jam. iii. 6, and that brings along with it a train of evils, Eph. iv. 31, quarreling, bitter words, railing and scolding, reviling and reproaching, swearing, cursing, fearful imprecations, blaspheming, &c. And all these, being traced to their original, are landed at the door of passion, which opening, sends out these as the smoke of the pit.

3. It disturbs society, and is destructive of it, Prov. xv. 18, "A wrathful man stirreth up strife. And where strife is, there is confusion, and every evil work," James iii. 16. It is the coal that fires families and neighbourhoods, and sets every one against another. Yea, hence proceed people's devouring one another, striking, fighting, wounding, and murdering: so that this passion has been the death of many, and brought many to an evil end.

4. It overclouds reason, as in the text. It carries a man out of himself, that he cannot judge of matters clearly, nor act deliberately; but it makes him rash and precipitate in his managements, so that when the fit is over, nothing remains to him by it but remorse.

5. *Lastly*, It unfits a man for his duty.—For the duty of his station; for often the passion makes him, that when he is doing, he knows not what he is doing.—For his duty to God, and mars any

thing of that kind in his hand, Jam. i. 29, "For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God." To conclude in a word, the effects of sinful anger are in a lively manner, represented by Moses in his holy anger breaking the tables of the law, Exod. xxxii. 19. When sinful passion is up, what will it not do? it will precipitate men into all mischief.

II. The next head is to shew how the passionate man proclaims his folly. He plainly discovers that he does not truly understand his duty to God, himself, Satan's malice, his own interest, or human nature; of which I have spoke before. Further, he proclaims himself,

1. A proud man, Prov. xxi. 24. The passionate man is always a proud man, and the proud man is a fool in God's account, and in the account of all who understand themselves. Were there less pride, there would be less passion: but he who is conceited of his own excellency, cannot miss to fall into the snare, while he receives not from others what he thinks is due to his merit.

2. A weak man, one incapable to rule himself, Prov. xxv. *ult.* Is he not a weak man, who rules not himself by grace or reason, but is a slave to his passion, and must roll or flee away before it, as chaff before the wind. You know, that children, by reason of their weakness of spirit, are easily fretted and angered: and of the same make are the passionate, who on every trifling occasion lose the mastery of themselves.

3. An unmortified man, whose desires of the world's smiles are too vigorous, his uneasiness at its frowns too great, his expectations from the world by far too big. For these are the sources of unruly passion, always arising from one's being disappointed in some one thing or other, Col. iii. 3, 8. And an unmortified spirit is a foolish spirit, James iii. 17, 18.

4. A rash and precipitant man, dangerous to society, apt to run himself and others into snares, Prov. xxii. 24, 25. And this must oblige both himself and others to call him a foolish man. It is the character of a prudent man to be deliberate in his motions, and foreseeing: but the passionate man is the very reverse of this, Prov. xxii. 3, "A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished."

5. *Lastly*, An unwatchful man, who has his enemies within him, without him, round about him, and yet cannot be brought to stand on his guard, and repress their motions, Prov. iv. 23, 24. This his practice is folly with a witness.

I shall now make some practical improvement of this subject.

Use I. Of humiliation and conviction.

1. It must be a dangerous and sinful thing designedly to provoke and stir up others to passion. Yet how many are there who make no bones of it, but will divert themselves with it? Thus the young and foolish especially, will please themselves in angering the aged and hasty. But let such know, that "fools make a mock at sin," Prov. xiv. 9. It is dangerous to please one's self with what is displeasing to God, and ensnaring to the soul of our neighbour.

2. What shame and confusion of face may cover every one of us, when we examine ourselves in this point? The picture of passion is drawn, and is it not an ugly one? But where is the man or woman that has not entertained this monster, and in whose breast it has not been bred many a time? O how unlike God and Christ has it made us, how unlike Christians, yea how-unlike rational men and women? Think not light of it,-Eph. v. 6. compared with chap. iv. 31. We must be washed from the guilt of it by Christ's blood, and the fire of it must be quenched by his Spirit, else we will be undone for ever.

USE II. Of exhortation; which I offer in these two particulars.

First, Beware of provoking and stirring up others to passion. Lay in no fuel to that fire in the breasts of others, neither designedly nor any other manner of way, without exception of any thing but necessary duty. If that will provoke people's passion, there is no help for it. Better men be provoked than God, Acts iv. 19. But otherwise beware of it, as ye will answer it to the God that made you. To press this, consider,

1. The law of love binds it on you, *Love thy neighbour as thyself.* If you do so, you will be loath to provoke him; for you would not choose to be provoked yourself. If you love his soul as you are obliged to do, you will be as loath to stir up his passion, as to fire his house. If you love his peace and welfare, you will be loath to rob him of it.

2. That is to be a snare to him, to lead him into sin. God charged his people, Lev. xix. 14. "Thou shalt not put a stumbling-block before the blind;" and the apostle will have all to take heed, "that no man put a stumbling-block, or an occasion to fall in his brother's way," Rom. xiv. 13. To lead your neighbour into a mire, over a precipice where he might fall, and break a leg or an arm, you will own would be akin to murder. This is worse, as being of the nature of soul-murder.

3. You are partaker of the guilt which is brought on another by your means: and it will justly be charged on you, as instrumental in it, laying the snare for them, 1 Kings xxi. 25. As he who lays the stumbling-block before a blind man, over which he breaks his

neck, is guilty of his blood; so are those that provoke others to passion, guilty of their sin.

4. *Lastly*, It is doing Satan's work, and that is a sorry office. When Peter advised our Saviour to beware of exposing himself to suffering, he says, *Get thee behind me, Satan*, Matth. xvi. 23. for he saw that Peter was serving him in that. Satan spared Job's wife, because he had use for her to provoke him to blaspheme. And that is the way they are employed who provoke others.

Therefore I beseech you, beware of this practice.

1. For God's sake, who is thereby dishonoured. The coal you cast into your neighbour's breast, kindles a flame there: but the smoke mounts upward, and darkens the heavens. And therefore, as ye have any love to God, or regard to his honour, treat your neighbour tenderly in that point.

2. For your neighbour's soul's sake, which is thereby endangered and involved in guilt, Rom. xiv. 15. Say not, *Am I my brother's keeper?* You certainly are so far: but certainly you can never think you are at liberty to be your brother's destroyer.

3. For your own sake, whose accounts are thereby increased with the addition of your neighbour's guilt. "Therefore be not ye partakers with them; and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them," Eph. v. 7, 11. Each of us will have enough ado with our burden; why should we adopt the sins of others, and stir them up to what will be laid to our charge?

4. *Lastly*, As ye would not do Satan a service and a pleasure. Dust is the serpent's meat; even the sin and ruin of mankind, with the dishonour of God, afford him all the satisfaction he has. It pleases him to see them snares to one another, and to cleave them with a wedge of their own timber,

I shall give you a few directions.

1. Be habitually concerned that ye stand not in the way of, but to advance the spiritual good of others, Gal. vi. 10. He who is concerned for one's recovery, will be careful not to do any thing that may occasion a relapse to him. It is Cain's humour, unconcernedness for the good, especially for the spiritual good of others, that makes men so easy on this point. But take that advice, Rom. xiv. 19, 20, "Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another. For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence."

2. Be conscientious in giving every one their due, Rom. xiii. 7, 8, "Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour.

Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another, hath fulfilled the law." There is an honour due to men as men, which makes them to be no objects of contempt, 1 Pet. ii. 17. Be always ready to give every one what is due to them, whether in the way of justice or charity. For wrong done, and contempt shown, are the great upstirrers of this passion, and kindlers of this coal, in the breasts of others.

3. Particularly make conscience of your relative duties. The nearer the relation is, the provocation pierces the more deep, the peace is the more precious, and the offence in many cases the harder to be removed, Prov. xviii. 19. Let husbands and wives be tender of one another in that case, and beware of provoking one another's passion, as they would not be snares to one another, Eph. v. *ult.* Let children honour and reverence their parents, as their natural lord; and parents treat their children as parts of themselves, Eph. vi. 1, 2, 4. Let servants be precisely just, faithful, and respectful to their masters, and masters just and equitable to their servants, verse 5, 9. It is the neglect of these things that provokes the passion of relatives.

4. Be not negligent and careless of your carriage and behaviour towards any body: for whatever difference there may be betwixt them and you, you owe them an honour, 1 Pet. ii. 17; you are capable of offending them, Matth. xviii. 7; and it is dangerous to be a snare to their souls, and all souls are alike precious. There was no more paid by Christ for the king's soul, than the beggar's, Rom. xiv. 15.

5. If one's passion be up or like to rise, silence is oft times necessary, *not answering again*, Tit. iii. 9. The reason is, *Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out*, Prov. xxvi. 20. Wrath is a fire, answering often is like coals or fuel laid to it. Therefore learn to *give place to wrath*, Rom. xii. 19.

6. But sometimes there is a necessity of answering, as when one is directly questioned, and an answer is looked for, and passion may be irritated by silence. The angry person judging himself despised by silence, John xix. 10. in that case a soft answer is a sovereign remedy, Prov. xv. 1. as yielding wool will be a better fence against a cannon-ball than a stone wall. A soft tongue breaks the bone, and yet wounds no body, Prov. xxv. 15. So did Abigail pacify David.

7. *Lastly*, Be still ready to do them all good offices, Rom. xii. 19, 20, 21. And look to the Lord for the blessing on these things, practising them out of respect to his command: and great will be your peace and satisfaction therein.

Let no body say, Such a way of carrying is mean and sneaking.

It is prescribed by God in his word, and it is recommended to us by the example of Christ, 1 Pet. ii. 23, "Who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not:" and it is true greatness of spirit, Prov. xxvi. 32, "He that is slow to anger, is better than the mighty: and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city."

Secondly, Beware of sinful anger in yourselves; bridle your own passion, and subdue it. Be not hasty in spirit; take not that fire into your bosom, nor cherish it, but extinguish it. To press this, I offer the following motives,

1. Consider it is a work of the flesh as really as adultery and idolatry, Gal. v. 19, 20. It is a notable piece of the corruption of our nature, not to be tolerated, far less cherished, but mortified. So the sowing to it will bring a reaping of corruption. It is far from bravery of spirit, but is a piece of man's corrupt spirit, the spirit of the world.

2. It is not only a sin, but it is a mother-sin, Prov. xxix. 22, "An angry man stirreth up strife, and a furious man aboundeth in transgression." It is seldom it comes alone, but has a hellish train along with it, as clamour, evil-speaking, &c. And as one fire serves to kindle another, so seldom anger rises in one's breast, but the sparks fly into another's, and so another flame is kindled there.

3. It is a murdering sin, as we may learn from our Saviour's teaching it to be forbidden in the words, "Thou shalt not kill, Matth. v. 21, 22. Ye have heard, that it was said by them of old time, thou shalt not kill: and whosoever shall kill, shall be in danger of the judgment. But I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment," &c. It is of a murdering nature to the man himself, Job v. 2. and to the man the sinful anger is conceived against. It is in its own nature heart-murder, Matth. v. 22. As he who lusteth after a woman is guilty of heart-adultery, so a sinfully-angry man is guilty of heart-murder. It is ordinarily attended with eye-murder, venting itself in a wrathful countenance. A proud look and bloody hands are joined, Prov. vi. 17. The Spirit of God takes notice of Cain's countenance, Gen. iv. 5. See Obad. 12. And it is attended with tongue-murder. Solomon observes that *death and life are in the power of the tongue*, Prov. xviii. 21. If passion have the management of it, no wonder that it be found guilty of murder. In its shapes it resembles both fire and sword, and with the mouth bow and arrow, all of them instruments of death: and in the angry man it is so, James iii. 6. Psal. lvii. 4. and lxiv. 3. And it has a native tendency to hand-murder, as in the case of Cain, Gen. iv. 5, 8.

4. It divests a man of his ornament as a man, whereby he differs from beasts, that is, his reason, Prov. xvii. 12. *Let a bear robbed of her whelps meet a man, rather than a fool in his folly.* While passion rules, reason is banished: that is he acts the beast, and lays aside the man so long. The beasts have their passion, anger, and wrath, as well as men: but they have no reason to guide it with, and therefore in them it is not sinful. But for men to indulge in their passion, and be ruled by it, is to degrade themselves into the order of beasts.

5. It divests a man of his ornament as a Christian, i. e. *a meek and quiet spirit,* 1 Pet. iii. 4. They who put on the new man, are supposed to lay aside and put off all these, *anger, wrath, malice,* &c. Col. iii. 8. Where the gospel comes in power, and casts the soul into the mould of it, it meekens the rugged spirit, Isa. xi. 6. conforms the soul to Jesus the pattern of meekness and lowliness. So that professors would know, that victory over their passion is necessary to evidence their interest in Christ.

6. It is a downright opposite to communion with God, in any of the duties of religion. What duty is the man fit for when he is in a fit of passion? If God be speaking to him by his word, he does not hear, his heart is taken up with the object of his anger; and therefore the apostle saith, 1 Pet. ii. 1, 2, "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as new born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." If he is to speak to God in prayer in that case, what comes of it? his praying is a burden to himself, and it is a burden to the Spirit of God too. "Therefore, (says Christ,) if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift," Matth. v. 23, 24. And says the apostle, "I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting," 1 Tim. ii. 8. For as troubled water is not fit to receive the image of the sun, so the soul in passion is not meet for divine communions. Ah! how many secret prayers and family prayers have been lost this way? Mal. ii. 13.

7. *Lastly,* It excludes men out of the kingdom of heaven, Gal. v. 19, 20, 21. And no wonder, for it is *a work of the flesh,* a mother sin, a murdering sin: and *no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him:* When men are brought into the kingdom of grace, their spirits are meekened: and there are none taken into the kingdom of glory above, but who are taken into the kingdom of grace here.

I shall conclude with giving a few directions.

1. Carry your sinful nature to Christ by faith to be healed, that ye may partake of the virtue of his blood and Spirit for your renovation, Gal. v. 24. Without this all other remedies will be but scurfing over the sore.

2. When ye are in hazard of the temptation, catch hold of the promise of protection and preservation by faith, and use the means of resisting, Eph. vi. 16, "Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked." Hence one bears sometimes greater affronts and injuries better than lesser ones; because in the former case they betake themselves to the shields of gold made by the true Solomon, faith and dependence on the Lord; in the latter, like fools they venture with the brazen ones of their resolutions, &c.

3. Consider the sufferings of Christ, when any thing thou sufferest is like to raise thy passion, Heb. xii. 3. Those stung by the serpents in the wilderness, were to look to the brazen serpent and be healed. The injuries thou receivest are stings in this wilderness; therefore look to Christ who is exalted on the pole of the gospel, and thou shalt be healed by him.

4. Study humility, and remember well what ill-deserving creatures ye have been; how sinful ye are, and whatever is done or said to you, you deserve it, and much more at his hand. This would make us lay our hand on our mouth, under the provocations we meet with, Tit. iii. 3. And whoever be the instruments of our uneasiness, we know it is in God's hand to make use of whom he will for our trial, 2 Sam. xvi. 11. It is pride that is at the bottom of all our passion, Prov. xxviii. 25.

5. Consider the injury done you, as a sin and as a trial.—As a sin of the party who does it; and this will turn your eye on the dishonour done to God thereby, and so make the injury to yourself light; it will also turn your anger into pity upon the party who is so unhappy as to provoke God against himself, by wronging you. Thus Christ said on the cross, Luke xxiii. 34. "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." And consider the injury as a trial to you, a trial of your patience: God is looking on, observing how you will bear it; and God chuses the instrument of the trial.

6. Bear down your passion with silence, if you find it beginning to rise. I do not bid you harbour it in your heart, but refuse to give it vent. Some will think, that perhaps it is better to give it a vent presently, and that it will be the sooner over. But what is that but to satisfy it with clamour, and then it will end? That is not the scripture-method, as you may see, Prov. xii. 16. "A fool's

wrath is presently known: but a prudent man covereth shame. Eph. iv. 31. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil-speaking be put away from you, with all malice." Give fire a vent, and it will burn while it has matter; but if it have no vent at all, it will die out. So it will be in this case.

7. Study a charitable disposition, and beware of a suspicious, curious, and credulous temper. This would be an excellent antidote against the attempts of passion, 1 Cor. xiii. 7. Charity will put the best construction on the actions of others that rationally they can bear, and so eases men of many supposed injuries, and many real ones too. Suspicion serves to gather in fuel from all quarters to the fire of passion, and would find it in plenty there, where charity would see none at all. Curiosity and credulity are passion's handmaids. He that is curious to know what others think and say of him, and credulous to believe every report, will not want enough to make him uneasy.

8. Remove the occasions of your passion, as people use to keep lint far from the fire, because the fire easily seizes on it. It is said of Augustus, that he did for this reason break some curious glasses of purpose. And it is said of turpentine, that it will draw fire to it. No fire is so easily drawn as that of passion. And therefore it is good to remove those things that draw it to them.

9. *Lastly, Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation;* and if at any time ye are catched, haste out of the snare. Dallying with temptation is the fair way to entangle you further: therefore fly from it as from a serpent, lest ye be stung to death thereby.

THE

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERS

OF

TRUE BELIEVERS.

V. IN RELATION TO THEIR FORGIVING INJURIES, IN OPPOSITION TO REVENGE.*

ROMANS xii. 19.

Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.

As in sinful anger there is a desire of revenge, so revenge is the hellish sacrifice to sinful anger, wherewith it is satisfied, and wherein it is fully accomplished. Therefore it is necessary to add a little concerning this. In the words there is,

1. A dehortation from revenge, which is proposed pathetically,

1*st*, With an endearing compellation, *Dearly beloved.* He knew how prone corrupt nature is to revenge, how hard it is to sinful men to be denied the satisfaction of it, when once their passion is up: therefore he interposes as it were with the angry man, and with softest words begs him to forbear.

2*dly*, Both negatively and positively, telling what is not to be done, and what is to be done.

(1.) Ye are not to avenge yourselves. All revenge is not sinful, nor here forbidden. For it is competent to God, as saith the text; and to the magistrate, chap. xiii. 4. "He is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doth evil." But it is private and personal revenge, namely, where one as a private man revenges himself on another, over whom he has no authority and power given him for that effect. *Avenge not yourselves.*

* This subject was discussed in two short discourses, preached at Ettrick, Nov. 7, and 8, 1724.

(2.) Ye are to *give place to wrath;* i. e. to the wrath of your adversary who does you the injury. Decline it as David did Saul's javelin thrown at him, rather than give him as good as he brings. Rather suffer injuries, than revenge yourselves at your own hand. It is just what our Saviour teaches, Matth. v. 39. "Resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." As if he had said, Take a second blow, rather than revenge the first.

2. A reason of the dehortation, which is taken from Deut. xxxii. 35. *To me belongeth vengeance, and recompense.*

1*st*, Revenge belongs to God; he pleads it as his own right, and he has put in his claim to it, as his sole privilege before the world, in the word, that none who hear the Bible can pretend ignorance. Therefore it belongs not to us, and we must not invade his right.

2*dly*, He will certainly see to the execution of it. Say not, If we are not allowed to revenge injuries, then they will go unpunished, and many wrongs we get will never be righted. No; God will right all wrongs; none of them shall go unseen to. He has given his word for it.

The doctrine arising from the text is,

Doct. One's revenging himself at his own hand on such as have wronged him, is deeply sinful and dishonouring to God, whose province alone vengeance is.

In treating this doctrine, I shall shew,

I. What this revenge is that is so deeply sinful and dishonouring to God.

II. What is the sinfulness and dishonour to God in it.

III. Make application.

I. I am to shew what this revenge is that is so deeply sinful and dishonouring to God, whose province alone vengeance is.

Revenge is twofold, public and authoritative, private and personal.

1. There is a public and authoritative revenge, which is taken on those that wrong others by such as are invested with a lawful power and authority for that purpose. This is so far from being sinful, that it is a necessary piece of justice and charity, and is done in the name and by the authority of God. Thus the magistrate has a power to revenge wrongs in the state, Rom. xiii. 4, forecited. So also have church-rulers power to revenge or censure scandals in the church, 2 Cor. x. 6, where the apostle speaks of *a readiness to revenge all disobedience.* And thus masters of families have a power to revenge wrongs in their families, as Abraham did in the case of Hagar,

Gen. xvi. 6. And it is of equal latitude with rightful government, in whatever lawful society. And persons wronged seeking redress from those to whom the public revenge belongs, is a lawful thing, and men are invested with authority that they may be so applied to, as the importunate widow did to the unjust judge, saying, *Avenge me of mine adversary*, Luke xviii. 3. And applying to them for it, they apply to God for it, since they act in his name.

2. There is a private and personal revenge, which is the requiting of a wrong with the like, or worse, for the satisfying of the passion of the injured, not supported by any authority from the God of vengeance. This is sinful revenge. The kinds of it are three.

1*st*, Revenge taken by those in authority, out of hatred and ill-will to the person of him who does the wrong. For they are *revengers to execute wrath*, Rom. xiii. 4. not their own wrath against the person, but God's, in whose name they act. And the executing of justice must still be an act of love to their neighbour, which is the sum of the second table, but never of hatred. No man has any authority from God to that purpose. So the public revenge in that case becomes so far private, deeply sinful and dishonouring to God.

2*dly*, Revenge sought from those in authority, in cases wherein it is neither necessary for the public good, nor the amendment of the offender, nor the safety of the party hurt. This also is private revenge, deeply sinful, and dishonourable to God. For in such cases there is nothing obliging the man's conscience to seek it, and therefore he is obliged to forgive it wholly, Col. iii. 13. All then that is aimed at in such cases, is the satisfying of the man's own revengeful passion, getting his heart's sight on the party that has wronged him: which is diametrically opposite to the royal law of love, and the spirit of Christianity, James ii. 8. Let such take heed to this, who fly to their law-pleaing on every trifling occasion, just to gratify their own passion. It is a horrid abuse of an ordinance of God; it is to make the law, the magistrate, and the authority of God which he is invested with, subservient to your revengeful passions, Matth. v. 40.

3*dly*, Revenge taken by those not in authority empowering them to take it, taken by persons not acting in a public capacity, but at the command of their passion fleeing to take revenge at their own hand; which is most directly forbidden in the text. It is a common sin in the perverse generation wherein we live. And this revenge is taken three ways.

1*st*, By words. I speak not here of revenge in the heart, for that belongs to anger, of which I have spoke already. But the tongue is as real an instrument of revenge, as the hands, swords, or spears.

Therefore say not, I will recompense evil, Prov. xx. 22. Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me: I will render to the man according to his work," chap. xxiv. 29. And what are the scoldings and floutings among people, but the acting of revenge on them for the wrong alleged to be said or done to them? One's passion is fired against another, and then they pursue them with bitter words, lying, railing, and reviling speeches; so that many can no more speak good of those by whom they conceive themselves wronged, but on all occasions boil out their revenge that way. And the passion of revenge is served by these speeches, as really as it would be by the blood of their offenders, though not to the same degree.

2*dly*, By deeds, Prov. xxvi. 29, above quoted. When men make one ill turn meet another, so that they come to be even with those that have wronged them, paying them home in their own coin or worse, which the Spirit of God directly forbids, Rom. xii. 17. *Recompense to no man evil for evil.* Thus many lay up their resentments till a convenient season that it falls in their way, to do their neighbour an ill turn, because he did one to them; which will have a fearful end, Isa. xxix. 20. Of this is beating, fighting, and murdering; to which the revengeful passion natively leads.

3*dly*, By omission of duty owing to the offending party, either in the way of justice, or charity, contrary to that, Rom, xii. 20. "If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him to drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head." Many think that is enough if they do no ill to those who offend them. But as the revengeful passion natively leads to withholding the good that is due, contrary to Prov. iii. 27. it is evident, that the withholding of it is a sacrifice to revenge, as well as the positive doing of ill to them. Even as the besiegers may revenge themselves as effectually on the besieged, by starving them, as by storming their town.

II. I proceed to shew what is the sinfulness and dishonour to God in this revenge.

1. It is directly opposite to the love of our neighour, the fundamental law of the second table, Lev. xix. 18. "Thou shalt not avenge nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself; I am the Lord." This law had in Christ's days a great deal of rubbish laid over it; but he cleared it from all that kind, both by this doctrine and example. But alas! how has the practice of Christians so called, laid it under much rubbish again! Will men pretend to love those as themselves, whom they must at their own hand, without law or right be revenged on? Nay, revenge is hatred carried to a height.

2. It is unjust violence, as assuming and exercising a power and

authority over men which God never gave us. Whatever difference there is betwixt private men, some more some less honourable, they are by right all equal so far, being together subject to those in authority to whom God has given the execution of wrath. And as unjust violence ever was so it will ever be highly dishonourable to God the Judge and Protector of all, Gen. vi. 11. Men are not left like beasts, among whom the stronger command the weaker; but God has set laws for one and the other.

3. It cannot reach the true ends of revenge, which God hath settled. It may indeed reach the end proposed by the proud heart, viz. the satisfying of passion: but that end, and the means to it, are alike abhorred by God. But God has appointed public revenge for the amendment of the party offending, Rom. xiii. 14. the public good of the society, Deut. xix. 20. and for the safety of the wronged thereafter, 1 Tim. ii. 2. But what doth private revenge but irritate the party smarting by it, give a scandalous example to others, and involve the party revenging and others too in much trouble?

4. It is void of all equity: for in it a man is accuser, judge, and executioner, all in his own cause. Who would reckon that fair in another's case? He not only accuses his neighbour of wrong, which is often so ill grounded, that if another were to judge, it would not be sustained: but he judges of it too, and passes sentence on his neighbour, to be sure in favour of himself: and finally he executes his own sentence: and all this when he is under the power of passion. Men are partial in their own favours at all times, and passionate then. Where then can equity have place, in a matter so stated?

5. It is an invading of the authority of those who are in authority, a taking out of their hand what God has put in it. Therefore the apostle immediately to this subject subjoins the duty of subjects to magistrates, and theirs to their subjects, Rom. xiii. Members of families revenging themselves on one another, invade the master's authority; church-members in the case of scandals, the authority of the church-rulers; and the members of the politic body, in the case of civil injuries, the office of the magistrate. And usurpation in all cases is a sin of a deep dye.

6. *Lastly*, It is an invading of the authority of God. God himself claims vengeance as his peculiar prerogative; it is a flower of the crown of heaven, which, he will not part with, as in the text. It is owned to be so by his good subjects, Psal. xciv. 1. "O Lord God, to whom vengeance belongeth: O God, to whom vengeance belongeth.—Nah. i. 2. God is jealous, and the Lord revengeth, the Lord revengeth." Therefore none are to meddle with it, but those

who have authority from himself to act in his name therein. He only is fit to have it in his hand, not we: for he is omniscient, we know little, and are liable to mistakes: he is without passions, we are ready to be blinded by them: he is the common Father and Judge of all, most just and impartial, we are prejudiced in our own favours. A father of a family will not allow the children to punish one another, but bids them complain to him. So saith God to men, but private revenge regards not his orders.

I shall now make some practical improvement of this subject.

Use 1. Of lamentation. We may hence take occasion to lament,

1. The state of human nature in general. How low are we brought who once stood in the image of God! We may see here man's nature sullied with two black lineaments of the picture of the devil. (1.) Wrong and injustice. Man was a righteous creature, but now he wrongs and is wronged, his fair righteousness that he was created in, is gone. Men are now thieves, robbers, and oppressors to one another: and every where the cry is heard of violence and wrong, and the nearest relation is not a fence against it, Micah vii. (2.) Revenge of wrong for satisfying of passion. Hence there is a cry of cruel suffering at the hands of men who were created harmless, and are born naked, as designed for the picture of peace. His meekness and patience is gone too.

2. The state of our nature of each of us in particular, that is so ready to revenge; so that no sooner an injury is received by us, but as powder is ready to fly up when a spark lights on it, our nature is no less ready to fly to revenge on the first appearance of an injury. It is humbling to think how early this piece of our nature appears, even in the babe in the mother's arms, who seeks and shews a satisfaction in the revenge of what is displeasing to it; though its giving the mother a stroke to give such a one &c. be ludicrous in itself, it is humbling to consider the rise of it.

3. The sinfulness of our lives. O what guilt lies on every soul of us in this point? What black accounts on the score of revenge? Though some perhaps have been kept from fighting, hurting, and wounding others; yet view the thoughts, words, lesser deeds, and omissions of duty, in the way of revenge, who can count his errors that way? O the need of the blood and Spirit of Christ for healing of our nature, for removing the guilt and stain of our lives that way?

Use II. Of reproof. It serves to reprove,

1. Those who allow themselves in scolding, railing on, and reviling those who they conceive have wronged them. Such tongue-vengeance did Shemei take on David, for which just ven-

geance fell afterwards upon him from the Lord, 2 Sam. xvi. 7, 8. It is an ill use of the tongue, to make it as a sword to pierce our neighbour, and as claws to tear him. This is that *clamour and evil-speaking*, which is the effect of passion, Matth. iv. 31. See the danger of it. Matth. v. 22.

2. Those who end their quarrels in blows and fightings. It is much to be lamented that this is so frequent amongst us. It is contrary to the letter of the text, and being so contrary to the laws of God, it is strange that those who own a God, and the Bible to be his word, that they make no bones of it. It is contrary to the laws of the land also. So that fighters do thereby shew, that they neither fear God nor regard men. In time of war, we were all men of peace, not a man among us to lend a hand to the defence of the public cause, for our King and country, religion and liberty, though called thereto publicly by public authority. Is it not sinful and shameful to be men of war then in time of peace? But from it we may see that the lusts of most men have a greater power to set their hands to action, than their consciences, James iv. 1. Ye have reason to decide your quarrels; if that will not do, ye have superiours to do it: why should men then, like unreasonable creatures, fall a pushing one another? But let such remember, that if they repent not and reform, the day will come wherein they shall read their sin in their punishment, Matth. xxvi. 52. *For all they that take the sword, shall perish by the sword;* and God will fight against them for ever. See Gal. v. 19—21.

3. Those who are sure to do an ill turn to those who have wronged them, if it lie in their power. They will confidently promise it, and perform it too, and boast themselves of it when they have done. It is a sign religion is at a low pass, and that the laws of Christ are little regarded among Christians, Prov. xxiv. 29. Matth. v. 44, 45. Alas! how shall we prove ourselves Christians indeed living at that rate? How would we suffer loss of liberty, goods, and life for Christ, with a spirit of meekness, when every private wrong can provoke our vengeance? What would they do more who never heard of Christ? It is worthless religion that puts not men to be followers of the meek and lowly Jesus.

4. *Lastly*, Those who make no conscience of doing their duty to those who have wronged them, but they carry towards them as if their offence loosed them from all bonds of duty to them, and so satisfy their revenge, Matth. v. 44—46. One's being out of their duty to us, is not enough for us to neglect our duty to them. Alas! what would become of us if God treated us at this rate, withdrawing his mercies from us upon every provocation? *Be followers of God.*

USE *ult.* Revenge not yourselves but rather give place to wrath, the wrath of your adversary. To press this, I offer the following motives.

1. This is true excellency and bravery of spirit. Men are much mistaken in their measures, who count otherwise. For,

(1.) In this ye will resemble the spirit Jesus Christ was actuated by, 1 Pet. ii. 23. "Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously." Luke xxiii. 34. "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." *Ye shall be as gods*, was the height of ambition that men aspired to very soon. Behold an allowable way how we may be like our Lord! in meekness and patience, suffering wrong rather than avenging at our own hand. This was the way how Christ, being true God as man, did walk. And therefore it is true excellency of spirit. When James and John would have revenged an affront offered to Christ by the inhospitable Samaritans, by commanding fire to come down from heaven and consume them, "He turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them," Luke ix. 55, 56. He had legions of angels at his command, yet he says, *Father, forgive them*, Luke xxiii. 34.

(2.) Ye will shew a generous contempt of the impotent malice of an evil world, possessing yourselves in the midst of all the sallies of it upon you, Luke xxi. 19. *In patience possess ye your souls.* The moon retains her brightness though the cur barks at her: and an excellent spirit retains its composure, notwithstanding the little rubs one meets with in an evil world.

(3.) Ye will shew yourselves masters of your own spirit; and many who have won cities by storm, have been trod under foot by their own spirits; which shews victory over the latter to be a more glorious thing than over the former, Prov. xvi. 32. "He that is slow to anger, is better than the mighty: and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city."

(4.) Ye will overcome him that wrongs you. Either you will gain him to return to his duty, Rom. xii. 20. or ye will at least keep your ground while his corruption carries him out of the road, and tends to drive you off your road too. So he is the true overcomer, not who does the wrong, but who bears it with patience, Rom. viii. 37. "In all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us."

2. Consider the wrong done to God by your revenging yourselves. Ye take out of his hand what he has reserved for himself on good

grounds; ye invade his sovereign authority, and pull a jewel out of the crown of heaven to adorn yourselves, Deut. xxxii. 35. forecited. Thus,

(1.) Ye impeach his justice, as if he like Gallio cared for none of these things, so that unless ye revenged yourselves, your wrongs would never be righted. This is the blasphemous language of that practice: for who believeth that a just God will revenge all wrongs, would take it out of his hand?

(2.) Ye impeach his wisdom, in committing vengeance into the hands of those in authority, saying, in effect, that it would be far better to leave that to private men, and that God's method of vengeance is not fitted to reach the end. And therefore ye will correct the ordinance of heaven.

(3.) Ye impeach his veracity, and refuse to believe his word, that he will repay. And therefore ye will repay injuries yourselves, as if God's word were not to be believed.

(4.) Ye dare his vengeance. If he is the God of vengeance, and will repay, sure he will take vengeance on those who contemn and invade his authority.

Now what wrong can any man possibly do to you, that will justify your doing such wrong to God?

3. Revenge is a most ensnaring thing, not to be harboured in the least. It is a sacrifice to passion, and involves the soul in guilt that way. It often carries men into such heights, as afterwards they would wish they had not gone to when it is past remedy. How many has revenge brought to an ill end? Yea, how many have been brought into compact with the devil by this means?

4. *Lastly*, It is inconsistent with peace with heaven and pardon. They who live in a course of revengeful passions, are living in a state of black nature, Tit. iii. 3. Our Saviour is express in that, Matth. vi. 15. "If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." How can ye go to God, to pray for pardon, when ye will not forgive those that sin against you? So revenge puts a bar in the way of your pardon: and the guilt of sin unpardoned will bar you out of heaven.

Object. The scripture saith, *Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.*

Ans. That was the law, the execution of which was not committed but to the magistrate; and does not belong to private persons.

Object. 2. If we put up with one injury, we will get more.

Ans. The text saith not so, Rom. xii. 20. "If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head." But better we get never so many wrongs, than that we wrong God by revenging ourselves.

Object. 3. It is not manly not to revenge affronts and wrongs.

Ans. As blackmoors paint the devil white, so do vain men their vices and corrupt passions. So proceeding from words to blows is manliness with them; whereas a little consideration would shew them, that it is childishness; for so do nurses still their babies, by revenging them on those that displease them. It is brutishness; anger a dog, and he will be ready to fly at your face. It is foolishness, Eccl. vii. 9. "Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry: for anger resteth in the bosom of fools." Was David not manly that revenged not himself on Saul? Saul says otherwise, 1 Sam. xxiv. 18—21. "Thou hast shewed this day how that thou hast dealt well with me: forasmuch as when the Lord had delivered me into thine hand, thou killedst me not. For if a man find his enemy, will he let him go well away? wherefore the Lord reward thee good, for that thou hast done unto me this day," &c.

Quest. How then should we do in the case of affronts and wrongs?

Ans. 1. Arm yourselves with meekness and patience, while you go through an evil world, laying your accounts that ye will have use for them, wherever ye are, and that daily.

2. Learn to bear with and forbear one another, and to be always ready to forgive the injuries done to you, so far as they concern yourselves, Col. iii. 13. "Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye." And there is no measure to which this forgiving is to be stinted, Matth. xviii. 21, 22. "Lord, (says Peter) how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, until seventy times seven."

3. In matters of weight, where the good of the party offending, the public good, or your future safety, makes redress necessary, apply to those for it who are vested with authority for that end, Rom. xii. 4. Only do it not from a spirit of revenge.

4. In that case, and in other cases, wherein redress is not to be expected, lay the matter before the Lord, put it in his hand, and wait for him, Prov. xx. 22. "Say not thou, I will recompense evil: but wait on the Lord, and he shall save thee."

5. *Lastly,* Live by faith, keeping your eye on Christ the fountain of strength, the pattern of meekness, and on the judgment to come, when all wrongs shall be redressed, and justice shall be done to every one.

THE

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERS

OF

TRUE BELIEVERS.

VI. IN RELATION TO LOVING THEIR ENEMIES.*

A PERSUASIVE TO LOVE OUR ENEMIES.

MATTHEW v. 44, 45.

Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you: that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven, for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

NEGATIVE holiness is short of Christianity more than the one half. It is not enough that we do others no ill, but we must do them good as we have access. Nor is it enough that we fly not out in passion and revenge on those who have wronged us, but we must love them.

Nature teaches us to love them that love us; and so the worst of men may learn that lesson, ver. 46, "For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?" But sanctifying grace goes higher, teaching to love them that hate us; and this is a lesson hard to learn. Hence the corrupt Jewish teachers, unable to come up to the intent of the holy law, brought down the law to their nature, and expounded the second great commandment of the law conformably, ver. 43, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.* Our Lord, who loved his enemies so as to die for them, does justice to that law here; and that end of the law which they had folded in, he folds out again, and stretches it out in its full length, so as to teach our foes as well as our friends. *But I say unto you, Love your enemies, &c.* In which words we have,

1. A duty enjoined, *Love your enemies.* It is supposed, that in

* The discourses on this subject were preached at Ettrick in November and December, 1724.

this world every body will have some enemies; and want who will, Christ's friends will not want enemies, who will hate them, and do them any mischief they can reach. The greatest innocency of life, and harmlessness, the greatest usefulness in the world, will not secure one from having enemies. Christ's own case demonstrates this. Well, what is our duty to them? Love them. That is explained, *Bless them, do them good, pray for them.* That is an old commandment, Prov. xxv. 21, "If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat: and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink." But it is new stamped with the authority and example of Jesus. And of all coin men are fondest of the very old and the split-new. Here are both together.

2. The necessity of this duty, and of obedience to this command. It is agreed among all to be the hardest duty of Christianity. The Papists will have it to be not a command, but a counsel of perfection. And if most Protestants would speak their hearts in this point, they would agree with them; for in effect they think and say, It is not for every one, it is only the attainment of some very rare good men; and though they cannot reach it, they are in no doubt for all that, that they belong to Christ. But our Lord teaches here the downright contrary, namely, the absolute necessity of it to all, to Christians of the smallest as well as of the greatest size: *That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven.* Not that we must first love our enemies before we can be adopted into the family of God; but that we must necessarily evidence our sonship by this, or else forfeit our claim to it. So *that ye may be*, is, that ye may appear to be. Adoption into the family of heaven is a great privilege. The question is, Who may claim interest in it, and who not? They who love their enemies may claim it; for thereby they discover they are really God's children, they are so like him: they who do not, may not claim that privilege; for they really are not God's children, they are so unlike him.

The text affords the following instructive note.

Doct. Loving of our enemies is a necessary evidence, mark, and character of those who are of the family of heaven.

In discoursing this subject, I shall,

I. Consider the duty of loving our enemies.

II. Shew that this loving of our enemies is a necessary mark and evidence of a child of God.

III. Make some practical improvement.

I. We shall consider the duty of loving our enemies. And here I shall show,

1. Who are to be understood by our enemies.
2. What is that love which we owe to them.

First, I am to shew who are to be understood by our enemies. In general, it aims at those about whom there is least to engage our love to them. For the more our Christian love is of that sort, it is the liker to the love of God, who loves freely, and does not find the objects of it lovely, but makes them so, And,

It is not only to be understood of those who are simply our enemies, but of those who are enemies to God as well as to us. This is evident from the context, for the law binds us to love our neighbour, ver. 43. Every body is our neighbour in the sense of the law. Therefore our enemies, even such of them as are enemies to God, are our neighbours, and so to be loved. And upon this principle our Lord's explication goes. Again, were not such as cursed, hated, and persecuted the disciples of Christ, the enemies of God as well as theirs? Yet the text will have those loved. Finally, the evil and unjust are so far loved of our heavenly Father, that he does them good: yet they are his enemies. Therefore we are to love them too, if we would be like him, ver. 45.

They would do well to consider this, who make the extent of their religion the boundaries of their love; who if they love those of their own religion and way, think they owe no love to others, but are at liberty to hate all the world besides; and could be content to exterminate and devour them under the notion of God's enemies. This is the way of the bloody Papists; and be who they will that go that way, they are actuated by the spirit of Antichrist, which is a spirit of hatred, not by the Spirit of Christ, which is a Spirit of love. If Christ had loved at that rate, there had never been a church in the world: but, as says the apostle, Rom. v. 10. *When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son.*

Object. 1. Does not the psalmist say, Psalm. cxxxix. 21, 22, "Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee? And am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee? I hate them with perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies?" And does not Jehu the son of Hanani the seer say to King Jehoshaphat, *Shouldst thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord?* 2 Chron. xix. 2.

Ans. (1.) There is a hating of one's way and course, and a hating of one's person. It is not the latter that is meant in these passages, but the former. They hate the Lord, rise up against him, are ungodly; that is their course, which our hatred must fix upon. So the sum of it is, I count them mine enemies, whose persons I am obliged to love, but their enmity I am obliged to hate. So a man loves his

sick child, though he loathes his loathsome disease, and seeks to root it out.

(2.) There is a hatred opposite to a love of complacency, and a hatred opposite to a love of good will: the former is what we should bear to the enemies of God, and is there meant; the latter is not.

Object. 2. Are not the prayers of the church bent against the enemies of Christ?

Ans. Yea they are, and for them too, in different respects; the former in respect of their wicked works, the latter in respect of their persons. And if there is no separating of their works from their persons, that their works are not to be destroyed but with the destruction of their persons, *i. e.* if they be incorrigible, then since God's honour must be dearer to us than all the world, we may lawfully pray against their persons too. And this is as consistent with the love in the text, as a parent's calling a surgeon to cut off his child's gangrened leg; he loves the leg, and would heartily wish its preservation; yet he must call for cutting it off, lest it ruin his child's whole body. See all this, Psal. lxxxiii. 16—18, "Fill their faces with shame: that they may seek thy name, O Lord. Let them be confounded and troubled for ever: yea, let them be put to shame, and perish: that men may know, that thou whose name alone is JEHOVAH, art the Most High over all the earth."

2. It is to be understood of those who are adversaries to us, or are against us any manner of way, whether they in that matter be against God or not. And so it takes in,

1*st.* Those who are not truly and properly our enemies, but in our account and reckoning only are enemies to us. And here is an occasion of the exercise of this grace and duty, as well as in the case of the most real enemy to us. For though one be not indeed your enemy, yet if you think him to be so, it is all a case to you to love him, as to love one that is really so; and if you reach it, it will be certainly acceptable to God, it will not be lost: for though it is your weakness to mistake one for your enemy who is not so, yet it is your excellency to love one whom you take for your enemy, Luke xxiv. 1. So this love is owing,

(1.) To those whom we take for our enemies, but are really only smiting friends. Wounding friends in a childish sickly world oft-times go under the name of enemies; while kissing enemies are taken for friends, Prov. xxvii. 6. "Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful." So it fared with Paul among the Galatians, chap. iv. 16. *Am I therefore become your enemy*, says he to them, *because I tell you the truth?* Much enmity is raised this way in the world. A sound reproof for sin, an

opposing of persons in sinful courses, is sufficient in the world to make enemies, and when the war is denounced against them, Amos v. 1, "They hate him that rebuketh in the gate." But if these must needs be your enemies, love them according to the text, saying with David, Psal. cxli. 5. "Let the righteous smite me, it shall be a kindness; and let him reprove me, it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head: for yet my prayer also shall be in their calamities."

(2.) To those whom we take for our enemies, but are only competitors with us in a lawful way. There is so much selfishness in the world, and so little regard to the interest of our neighbour, that a great many imaginary enemies are made this way. Thus Joseph's brethren took him for their enemy, and pursued the quarrel against him. So a man's pursuing in a lawful way for his own, what enmity does that many times breed among men? Persons of the same employment or occupation, what envy, grudge, and enmity is raised among them on that very head? Where there is an advantageous bargain to which all are alike free, how often is the man that gets it looked on as an enemy to the rest? And at bottom it is just because he is a friend to himself, which all the world must allow, so it be in a lawful way. But if such must needs be enemies, know you ought to love your enemies.

2dly, Those who are indeed our enemies, whom we reckon so, and who are truly what we reckon them. Here is occasion for the exercise of this grace and duty: and it is not likely that any body appearing in the world wants such occasion. If they belong to God, they will not want it, Luke vi. 29. Let all then take heed that they be found in the way of this duty. These enemies are of two sorts, but all of them to be loved, according to the text.

(1.) Stated ememies, in respect of a course of enmity. And these,

[1.] Stated public enemies, who, in their principles and by open profession, are opposite to us, and practise accordingly. Such were the unbelieving Jews, particularly the Scribes and Pharisees, to the followers of Christ, inwardly hating them, openly cursing them, and accordingly persecuting them. But, says our text, *love your enemies*. This party-enmity is frequent in the world, and it is the bane of the church. It is the native fruit of the corruption of our nature. Men are by a certain propensity of nature led to hate and bear enmity and grudge against those they differ from: it grows up like thistles and other weeds of its own accord, so that no man shall be kept from it, if he set not himself by grace to bear it down, and root it up. And the mischief of it is in church-differences especially, that people look on this brood of hell as the offspring of heaven, and so call

it zeal and duty; and the more of it they have, think they are the better men. Hence said our Lord, John xvi. 2. "The time cometh, that whosoever killeth you, will think that he doth God service." But O how far are they deceived in this! Jam. iii. 13, &c. Our Lord crushed the appearance of this in his disciple, Luke ix. 54, 55. Nay, he shed his blood to quench this unhallowed fire, Eph. ii. 16, "That he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby." This is the design of the parable of the man that fell among the thieves, Luke x. 30.

[2.] Stated private enemies, who set themselves in a course of enmity against such and such persons. Such enemies were Herod and Pilate to one another, Luke xxiii. 12. We call this state *variance*, Gal. v. 20. and this kind of enmity *feud*, a settled, stated, continued enmity. Such had Joseph's brethren against him, Ahab against Macaiah, and Absalom against his brother Amnon. This is frequent every where, spreading itself like venom among neighbours, yea among relations, and among neighbours of all sorts. And they that have such enemies, think it not to be enough to be wise as serpents, to be on their guard as to them; but they think they are warranted to join therewith the venom of the serpent too: and so they are even with them. Hence they will not speak together, but on all occasions are sure to be at them, and to bear hard on one another, pursuing their war. But this is not the way of God: on the contrary, says the scripture, "If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat: and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink, Prov. xv. 21. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good," Rom. xii. 21. See the law, Exod. xxiii. 4, 5. These things will exclude men out of heaven, Gal. v. 21.

(2.) Occasional enemies, who, upon particular emergent occasions, do wrong to us; but not from a stated enmity against us. If we are to love our stated enemies, much more these, Col. ii. 13. There are thousands of enmities of this nature: and such is the weakness and corruption of our nature, that there is no body but, either through inadvertency or the power of temptation, do thus wrong others. So that if men must hate those who so treat them, they will be Ishmael-like, having their hand against every man they have to do with, &c. But it is utterly unlike the gospel to blow up these sparks into a fire. But love such enemies notwithstanding: for "if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses," Matth. vi. 15.

Both these kinds of enemies are of three sorts.

[1.] Heart-enemies, who in their hearts are set against us, burning with grudge, malice, and rancour at us. The text is plain as to

our duty in that case, *Do good to them that hate you.* Love begets love, even among those void of the grace of God; so if ye love them who love you, ye are not one step beyond the profane in that point, ver. 46. But if ye would show the power of God's grace in you, ye must be heart-friends to your heart-enemies, having your heart towards them, whose heart is away from you.

[2.] Tongue-enemies, who employ their tongues against us like swords, arrows, fire, and scourges. *Bless them that curse you.* These are very dangerous enemies, and sometimes give very deep and galling wounds, Psal. lvii. 4. "My soul (says David,) is among lions, and I lie even among them that are set on fire, even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword." One does not know how to get out of their way. Men may flee from the hands of their enemies, but who can flee from their tongues? Only God himself can be a refuge herein, Job v. 21. "Thou shalt be hid from the scourge of the tongue." But even to these you owe love, Psal. cix. 3, 4, 5. And tongue-love will not pay that debt, it must be heart-love, Prov. x. 18. Wit may furnish the former, but true wisdom must furnish the latter in that case.

[3.] Hand-enemies, who in their actions and deeds are enemies to us; not only in their hearts wishing us ill, and with their tongues speaking ill of us, but to their power, and as they have occasion doing ill to us, "Pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you." Our Lord binds us even to love these, and that while they are doing against us. So he gave us example, Luke xxiii. 34. "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." So the first martyr followed the blessed example, Acts vii. 60, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." And so must we shew ourselves to be the children of the blessing, 1 Pet. iii. 9. "Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise, blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing." The corrupt heart's motion is to do ill for ill, but by grace we must do good for ill: that is heaven's exchange.

SECONDLY, I come to shew what that love is which we owe to our enemies: We must love them. It is necessary to explain this, both negatively and positively.

First, Negatively. We are not bound to love them,

1. So as for their sakes to be reconciled to and at peace with their sin. Our Lord obliges us to love the persons of our enemies, but not the wrong they do to us, and much less the wrong they do to God. We are not, under pretence of this love, to give over opposing them in evil: that were to hate them, not to love them, whatever they may think, Lev. xix. 17. Or if it is called love, it is

to love them more than God, 1 Sam. ii. 29. We must love and strive to please one another, but *to edification, not to destruction.* Not only does the father love his child, though he chastens him; but because he loves him, therefore he chastens him. And the more we love any truly, the more we will hate their sin.

2. Neither does this love bar seeking redress of wrongs in an orderly way. If God had meant that men should be in the earth, like the fishes in the sea, where the greater swallow up the lesser, without possibility of redress, nothing being left to the weaker but to yield themselves, he had never appointed the magistrate, "a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doth evil," Rom. xiii. 4. And Jesus Christ never extended his precepts to the pulling down of the fence of human society, government, governors, and laws. And what he said of turning the other cheek to him that smote the one, himself explained, John xviii. 23. "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me?" being ready to receive a second stroke rather than to revenge that he had got; but withal complaining of the wrong before a judge. Men may do this, and love the enemy that wrongs them notwithstanding.

3. Neither doth it bind us to a love of complacency in them. That is, we are not obliged to take delight in them, make them our intimate and familiar companions, associate with them as our friends, being in a course of enmity against God. Jehoshaphat was reproved for that, 2 Chron. xix. 2. David makes it a mark of his sincerity, that he abstained from it, Psal. cxxxix. 21. Solomon tells us, Prov. xiii. 20. "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed." And everywhere the scripture calls us off from complacency and intimate communion with evil men. It holds too in the case of those who are really our enemies simply, otherwise we were to make no difference between our friends and our foes! hence says Christ, Matth. x. 16, 17. "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues." Wise walking is a Christian duty, wherein the wisdom of the serpent is kept, but separate from its venom, Prov. xiv. 15. *The prudent man looketh well to his going.*

Secondly, Positively. There is a threefold love that uses to be distinguished. (1.) A love of complacency; (2.) of good will; and (3.) of beneficence. As to the first, I have already shewed, that it is not owing to our real enemies. Our Lord bids us *bless*, but not sing and rejoice with those that curse us: *do good to*, but not delight in and take them into our bosom, that hate us: *pray for*, but not as-

sociate, as with our best friends, with those who despitefully use us, and persecute us. It is the two latter kinds of love that we owe to them. And this is evidently clear from the whole of this context, to be the full compass of the love to our enemies; which is explained,

1. Of the love of good-will to them, ver. 44. "Bless them,—pray for them. So, ver. 47. If ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so?" The publicans salute, *i. e.* bear and show good will to those who bear and show it to them.

2. Of the love of beneficence, ver. 44. *Do good to them.* So do the publicans, verse 46. rewarding one another's good deeds. Of these two it is explained from God's own example, verse 45. "That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven, for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." God doth not entertain a love of complacency in evil and unjust men; but that is the peculiar portion of the good and just from the Lord. But he follows the evil and the good, just and unjust, with a love of good-will, making his sun to rise on them; so heaven opens its eye, and looks to them as wishing them well. And he follows them with a love of beneficence, making his rain to fall, whereby fruitful seasons are made.

These two together make the perfection of that love that men promiscuously are fit objects of, ver. 48. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." If we consider men as just and good, they are fit objects of the divine and human complacency: as evil and unjust, they are not fit objects of the one nor of the other. But the worst of them may be fit objects of good will and beneficence. And God's love is perfect in affording them both these: and if we afford them the same, our love that we owe to them will be perfect too, no due part being lacking. Then,

First, We owe to our enemies, our real enemies, a love of good-will, Rom. xiii. 9. *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.* Our hearts ought to be lovingly disposed towards them, and they to have a room in them, as we when we were yet enemies had in the heart of Christ. If we be not so disposed, we have not the Spirit of Christ. Good-will is a debt we owe to mankind, even the worst of them: and though it takes nothing out of our pocket, it is not easily paid. There is need of a stock of grace, for nature's stock will soon be exhausted, Tit. iii. 3. This good-will lies in,

1. We must not wish them ill as ill to them, Psal. xl. 14. We must pluck up the roots from which ill wishes to them do spring up. Envy, which looks with an ill eye on their welfare, and would eat

it up, James iii. 16; hatred, which blocks up all good from us to them, Lev. xix. 17; grudge, which is a train lying within the heart, ready to be blown up on occasion for mischief to them, Lev. xix. 18; and malice, which like a burning fire pursues them with ill-will, Eph. iv. 31. Our ill wishes can do them no ill, but they do ourselves much. Every ill wish is an item in our accounts before God, and the reigning root of ill-will to our neighbour proves one to be naught, 1 John ii. 11. "He that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes."

But this extends not to these two cases. (1.) The wishing one an ill for good to him, *e. g.* the losing of such an one's favour, the having of which is a snare to his soul: the lowering of one's outward circumstances, whose prosperity makes him forget God and himself. But in this case the thing wished, though in itself an evil, is wished as a mean of good, and of good to the person. (2.) The wishing evil to a person for the good of many, as that one who is a corrupter of others, and incorrigible in it, may be taken out of the way. For the honour of God and the public good is always preferable to the private good of one, Gal. v. 12.

2. We must not take pleasure in any ill that befals them, as ill to them, Prov. xxiv. 17. "Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth." To make the miseries of others our delight, is unbecoming the spirit of the gospel; it is a feeding with the serpent on dust; that is to say, a joining issue with the devil in our rejoicing. But O how much of that spirit is in the world; yea, how naturally does the heart of man take that bias! Though perhaps men will not do them ill, yet it is a pleasure to them to hear of others doing it, or of Providence's reaching them some stroke. The former cases must be excepted here too. But otherwise it is a very wicked disposition, to take pleasure in our enemy's hurt. Job clears himself in that point, Job xxxi. 29. "If I rejoiced at the destruction of him that hated me, or lift up myself when evil found him." There is no exception, Rom. xii. 15. "Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep."

3. We must heartily wish them well, 1 Tim. i. 5. "Pray for them," says the text. We must wish them the best things, that they may be for ever happy; may have favour and peace with God, Luke xxxiii. 34.; and that for that cause God may grant them faith, repentance, and all other saving graces. For it is a vain wish, and worse than vain, to wish people happy, living and going on in their sins: therefore our wishes must be so regulated as God's

stated method of grace may be kept in due regard. And as for other things that are temporal, we must wish them these as they may best promote those ends.

4. We must wish them well, as well to them, Psal. cxxii. 8. Men may wish well to their enemies, from a mere carnal principle, not as being well for them, but for themselves. That is, they may wish them repentance, &c. for their own ease, not from any love to their souls. But God sees through that, and will account it no more than it is, that is, self-love, not love to our enemies. To overlook our own interest, and from love to God, and our neighbour, to wish well to those that are our enemies, is worthy of a Christian.

Secondly, We owe to our enemies, our real enemies, a love of beneficence, whereby we will be ready to do them good as we have access; and therefore says the apostle, 1 John iii. 18. "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and truth." And certain it is, that where the heart in good earnest wisheth them good, the tongue and the hands will be ready to do them the good we wish them, and can do them. Man was born for society, and no man was born for himself only, but is obliged to seek the good of others too; and their enmity to us looseth not that bond.

1. We must not practise revenge upon them, by doing one ill turn for another they have done us, Rom. xii. 19. "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath." They that are farthest behind with their neighbour here, are in best case: for revenge for wrongs done is a debt that will be paid, and the longer it is a-paying, it will be the heavier charge at length. But God has kept the clearing of that debt in his own hand, and we are not to meddle with it. Revenging ourselves on our enemies is the utmost remove from the love we owe to them. It is hatred, flaming hatred against them, instead of love. It tends to their destruction, and therefore denominates men *murderers* before the Lord, 1 John iii. 15. O that men would consider how they will answer it to him, who having set us a pattern, commands us to love our enemies. So forbearing positive revenge is the lowest step of this love.

2. We must not with-hold from them the good that is due to them from us by any particular tie; but must be sure to be in our duty to them, though they be out of their duty to us, Prov. iii. 27, "With-hold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it." It is not enough that we do them no ill, but we must do them the good we owe them, by whatsoever such tie, whether they be special neighbours, or nearer relations. For the duty we owe one to another in our relations, is not founded on

mere compact, that when the one breaks the other is loose; but upon the authority of God, which binds both parties. If men would then turn their eyes upward, and look to God as the common Master, they would find reason from his command, to continue in their duty to those who cast off their duty to them, as far as they can have access.

3. We must be ready to do them good as Providence puts an opportunity in our hand, Gal. vi. 10. "As we have opportunity, let us do good unto all men." This love of beneficence takes in this also as the crowning ingredient, the highest step in it. (1.) We must do them no ill. (2.) We must do them all the good we owe them, and they can challenge of us by any particular tie. But we must go higher yet, and, (3.) Do them all the good that we have access to do them, though they cannot challenge it by any particular tie. Here is a general tie in the text, to make up that want: and in these cases though they cannot challenge it of us, our God and Lord can and doth. The Jews who crucified Christ, and stoned Stephen, could not demand their prayers for them as a debt they owed them by a particular bond: but the extensive law of love required them, and Christ fulfilled that law in that as in other points; and Stephen wrote after his copy. So that it will not be sufficient to shift a good work toward such and such persons, to say we owe them none. Now we must be ready to do them good,

1*st*, In their temporal interest, Rom. xii. 20. "If thine enemy hunger, feed him: if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head." Thus our Lord Jesus went about doing good in the midst of his enemies, healing their sick, curing their blind, &c. He was a public benefactor, though in the mean time he was the object of the public enmity. So if it lie in our way to advance their temporal interest, and do them a good turn for that end, we must not withhold it, whatever enmity they shew or have shewn to us.

2*dly*, In their spiritual interest, contributing our utmost endeavours as we have access for their eternal happiness, Prov. xi. 30. *He that winneth souls is wise.* Thus Christ and his apostles gave us an example in their thirsting for the soul-good of the Jews, their declared enemies. When the winning or losing of a soul comes in competition with any wrong done to us, that wrong is not worth noticing; for the redemption of the soul is precious above all. And for both these we must be ready,

(1.) To speak for their good: for a good word is often of such usefulness to men, that it may be reckoned among good deeds. This was Jeremiah's comfort, that he had so done for his people, who

were very abusive to him, chap. xviii. 20. "Shall evil be recompensed for good? for they have digged a pit for my soul: remember that I stood before thee to speak good for them, and to turn away thy wrath from them." And when we may advance the good of those who are our enemies by our speaking for them, then is the time to speak.

(2.) To act for their good, Rom. xii. 20. forecited. The spirit of the gospel disposeth men not only to use their tongues, but their hands for the good of their enemies; and to abide some stress themselves, for doing good to them, Rom. v. 7, 8. "For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." If men please themselves with giving one good words for their enemies, while they have access to do them good deeds, but will not, we may say, *What doth that profit?* James ii. 16.

For all this we must be,

(1.) Habitually disposed to beneficence towards them. The habitual bent and frame of our souls should be to do good to all, our enemies not excepted. For that is the native effect of the writing of the law of love on the heart.

(2.) We must readily fall in with any special opportunity that Providence puts in our hand for that effect, Gal. vi. 10. How do ill men strike in with an opportunity to do an ill turn to their enemies? So would we show ourselves Christians, by striking in with an occasion of doing good to our enemies, as knowing that then God is putting us to the trial in that point.

II. The next general head is to shew, that this loving of our enemies is a necessary mark and evidence of a child of God. Ye have heard what it is not, and what it is: consider now that you must either reach it, or forfeit your claim to God as your Father. I do not say, that without perfection in it ye cannot make that claim. It is our duty indeed, but we can no more reach a perfection of degrees in it, than in other graces and duties. But the reaching of it in a perfection of parts, the sincere aiming at, and endeavouring it, as other graces and necessary duties, in the habitual course of our lives, is such a necessary mark and evidence of a child of God, as appears from the following considerations.

1. The living in malice and envy against any, is an evidence of one in the black state of nature, a child of hell. Hence says the apostle, Tit. iii. 3. "We ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another." The scripture

calls our natural state *the gall of bitterness*, Acts viii. 21, 23. and natural men *a generation of vipers*, Matth. iii. 7. Men falling into enmity against God, fell into enmity one against another; and, rendering themselves hateful to God, came also to hate one another: and there is no effectual cure for it, till they return to God, the centre of unity. See it in the case of our first parents. So this reigning enmity against any is the native produce of man's apostate state, discovering it as surely as smoke does fire. Therefore love to our enemies is a necessary mark and evidence of a child of God.

2. To love our friends and hate our enemies, is nothing above the reach of nature, corrupt as it is. The Pharisees, that generation of vipers, as short as they cut the law, left so much of it in that point, Matth. v. 43. "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy." The worst of men may do that; self love teaches it, and produces it: therefore there is no body, but they bear love to some others. But surely Christianity must carry men farther than the worst of men; therefore a true Christian must necessarily love both his friends and enemies, since there is no medium betwixt these, verse 46, 47. The true Christian must love all men, since the worst of men love some: else the children of heaven and of hell are alike.

3. The want of it will evince the person to want the true love of God; and he who wants that, surely is not a child of God, but a child of the devil. Men will persuade themselves, that though they can have no love to such and such a one whom they look on as their enemy; yet they love God, and that is enough. But hear what the Spirit of God says in this case, 1 John iv. 20, "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" Men do not love God truly, who cannot love men for his sake: and the love of our friends is loving for our own sake, if we do not love our enemies too. For if we loved for God's sake, then we would love all whom he bids us: but sticking at the love of our enemies so expressly required by him, shews that we do not love God, since we will not do that for his sake. If we love ourselves, we must love our friends, because they love us: but the great trial is in the love of our enemies, where we cannot fetch the arguments for loving them from ourselves, but from God.

4. It is a necessary consequent of regeneration, and without that no man shall see heaven, 1 John iii. 9, 10. "Whosoever is born of God, doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: Whosoever doth not

righteousness, is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother." If we be God's children, we have got the new nature, and old things are done away. Then we will be no more living in malice, hateful, and hating one another. But these things will be laid aside. Hence it is prophesied of the gospel-days, Is. xi. 6. "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid: and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them." If we are born again, the law is written on our hearts, Heb. viii. 10. whereof love is the sum; and particularly the loving of our neighbour as ourselves, is the second great commandment. And it is evident from the Scriptures, that our enemy is our neighbour in the sense of the law. So if we are not disposed to love our enemies, we are not disposed to love our neighbour; and if we do not that, the law is not written on our hearts; and if it is not written, we are not born again, and so are not God's children.

5. If we love not our enemies, we are not like God; and if we be not like him, we are not his children; for all his children have his Spirit in them, Gal. iv. 6. and they all bear his image, Col. iii. 10. Therefore says our Lord, Matth. v. 45, "Love your enemies—that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven, for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." God loves even those that are his enemies, seeking their good, and doing them good: yea, "He loved the world so, (while yet enemies,) that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life," John iii. 16. If we look to the work of creation, he gave us our being, and the whole world; if to providence, he sustains us by his bounty; if to redemption, "God commended his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us," Rom. v. 8. How can we then be like him, if we love not our enemies?

6. If we love not our enemies, we have not the Spirit of Christ, and so are none of his, Rom. viii. 9. Our Lord Jesus gave us a most complete pattern of love, extending to our enemies as well as friends. He sought the good of all, the hurt of none; he did good to those that did ill to him; he prayed for them who used him most despitefully; nay he died for them by whose hands he himself died. We can never then be reckoned his disciples, and of his family, nor to have his Spirit, without we love our enemies.

7. *Lastly*, Without this we are murderers in the sight of God, and so have no share in eternal life, 1 John iii. 15. "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer

hath eternal life abiding in him." We show ourselves the children of the grand murderer, and so must have our portion with him.

I conclude this subject with some practical improvement.

USE 1. Of information. This shows us, that,

1. It is not easy to be a Christian indeed, however easy it is to take on the name and profession of it. Christianity has in it supernatural truths to be believed, and supernatural duties to be done; which the arms of natural abilities are too short to reach. Divine grace is absolutely necessary for these.

2. Christianity lies in a Christian or Christ-like disposition of heart, and a conduct of life agreeable thereto, Jam. i. 22. There is a power of godliness, which casts the heart into a mould of conformity with the example of Christ, and regulates the life in a suitableness thereto. Where that power is wanting, there is no true godliness.

3. Those who pick and choose in religion, taking the easier, and not meddling with the difficult duties thereof laid before them, do but deceive themselves. Though ye love professors of religion, and the children of God who are friendly to you; for all that ye are none of God's family, if ye love not your enemies too. The false mother would have the child divided; Pharaoh would have let Israel go, if they would but have left a part with him. But we must either take on Christ's whole yoke, or none at all.

4. Christianity is the best friend of human society. O how happy might the world be if it should obtain! What peace, safety, and ease would there be among nations, in neighbourhoods, and in families? It would be an effectual quench-coal to all the fightings, quarrellings, jarrings, strifes, and wrongs, that take away the comfort of society. There are indeed professors of religion, who are fire-brands and pests to society, by their injustice, contention, &c. but better a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the midst of the sea, than that such things should take place: James iv. 1. "From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts, that war in your members?"

5. *Lastly*, There are few Christians in the world; the children of God's family are very rare; even as rare as they are who love their enemies. For the one and the other are of equal latitude. The children of this world are hateful, and hating one another; the badge of the saints is love, which is rare to be seen.

USE II. Hereby ye may discern, whether ye are the children of God or not. This is an evidence proposed by Christ himself, the elder brother of the family. All those of the family of heaven capable of loving or hating their neighbour, have the Spirit of the

family, which is a benign and favourable one, causing them to love even their enemies with a love of good will and beneficence. So this writes death to, and excludes out of the number of the children of God.

1. All those whose hearts are so soured with the real or imaginary wrongs they conceive themselves to have received from such and such persons, that they cannot find in their hearts really and truly to wish them well: but they desire, seek, long, and, thirst for mischief to befal them, that they may have the satisfaction of it. This is the badge of the devil's family, Tit. iii. 3, and speaks one's spirit to be leavened of hell. It is the venom of the serpent appearing in his seed, whatever profession they make, Matth. iii. 7. It was eminent in the scribes and Pharisees; and is ordinarily most virulent in hypocritical professors, because of their reigning pride and self-love. To all such we may say, "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" Matth. xxiii. 33.

2. All those whose spirits are so bitter against those who are or are accounted their enemies, that their hands are quite bound up from doing them a good turn lying in their way, but on the contrary will do them an ill turn if they can. This is the *malignity* that is the brand of hell, Rom. i. 29. to which the malignant spirit prompts men: and it reigns in those of the devil's family, who like Cain are *of that wicked one.* They must be revenged, and vengeance shall certainly be taken on them: they cannot forgive, and therefore they cannot be forgiven. Wo must be to them for ever, for the measure they mete shall be measured to them.

On the other hand, this doctrine speaks comfort to those who are so disposed habitually, as heartily to wish well to their enemies, and evidence it by doing them the good they have access to do them; and that from an inward principle of love to them, flowing from the love of God, and from a sense of the command of Christ. See the text. No doubt hypocrites and carnal men may have the counterfeit of this. But ye may safely take the comfort of love to your enemies,

(1.) If it be a loving of them indeed and in truth, and not in word and tongue only, 1 John iii. 18. Men for their own sake may give their enemies their best words and wishes, while these are but a white cover of black hatred. But happy they who are real in their good wishes to them, and evidence the same by their deeds, as they have opportunity.

(2.) If it be evangelical in its spring and rise. A good humour, some particular interest of men's own, may go far in the counterfeit of this. But the true love to our enemies rises from gospel-principles.

The man considers his own natural enmity to God, the acts of enmity against God which himself is often falling into, the love of God to us while yet enemies in giving Christ for us, &c.; and his soul is softened and melted down into this love.

(3.) *Lastly*, If it be universal, not extending to some only for whom we retain a particular regard, but to all whom we take for our enemies. For if the spring of it be evangelical, it will be universal: since in that case the reason for bearing that love to one, is a reason for bearing it to all; for being in charity with all the world.

USE *ult.* Evidence yourselves children of God, members of the family of heaven, by loving your enemies. Set yourselves to the conscientious practice of this duty, laying aside all hatred, malice, and revenge against others. To press this, let me suggest the following motives.

1. It is the command of God and his Son Jesus Christ. God gave us that command, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.* Christ opened it, and particularly enforced it as to our enemies. And it is not a naked command, but backed with the example of God and Christ, which must have weight with all who have any regard to either.

2. Ye were baptized in the name of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, all of you, and many of you have communicated in the Lord's supper. Since ye have taken on the external badge of the family, walk as becomes members of that holy society. Ye were baptized into Christ's death, which was for his enemies: the supper is the commemoration of his dying for us while yet enemies. How natively then do they bind to this duty?

3. The more ye have of this, ye are the more like God; the less ye have of it, ye are the more unlike him. Here is a piece of holy ambition, to strive to be more like God, in universal good-will and beneficence. Here is your true glory.

4. This is the way to be useful in the world. You will be useful for God this way, who will be much honoured by it, John xv. 8, "Herein is my Father glorified, (says Christ,) that ye bear him much fruit, 1 Pet. ii. 9. Ye are a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." Ye will be useful to others; particularly ye may be useful to your very enemies, Rom. xii. 20, 21. And this is a noble thing; for *it is more blessed to give than to receive.*

5. It will be much to your own advantage. While others rack and torment themselves with their impotent malice, ye will enjoy a calm and serenity in your own minds. You will have the satisfac-

tion of the testimony of your own conscience, that you are not enemies to them, but in charity with them, 2 Cor. i. 12.

6. *Lastly*, Your claim to the family of God depends on it. The enmity of wicked men will perish in a little, Eccl. ix. 6; but they will eat the bitter fruits of it for ever in hell. And you will eat the fruit of love in heaven.

I shall conclude with a few directions.

1. Come to Christ, and unite with him by faith, Heb. xi. 6. Without this ye will never reach this nor any other duty acceptably. Until ye believe, ye are in the gall of bitterness; and the grapes of love to our enemies will never be gathered off such thistles. Without it ye cannot have the new nature, 2 Cor. v. 17, for it is in Christ only we are made partakers of the divine, and the power of the devilish nature is done away. Without faith ye cannot love God truly, 1 John iv. 19. How then will ye love your enemies? Would ye quench the hellish fire of malice, hatred, and revenge in your breasts? go inward, and see to your own soul's case in the first place, shew a love to your own perishing souls, be convinced of your sin and misery, and betake yourselves to Christ in the promise of the gospel. Then will ye be capable of this Christ-like disposition and duty.

2. Bear up in your hearts a deep sense of your sinfulness, with the faith of pardon thereof. This will natively produce it, Tit. iii. 2, 3. A sense of our own sinfulness against God, will blunt the edge of the enmity of others against us, that it will not pierce so deep with us, as with the proud unhumbled sinner. The faith of pardon from heaven to ourselves, will make us easy to forgive others. To think that God has forgiven us ten thousand talents, will make us ready to forgive the hundred pence to our fellow-servants.

3. Ply your hearts with the believing thoughts of the beneficence of God to his enemies, and the love of Christ dying for his enemies to redeem them from wrath. As the darkness of the night, mists and fogs, go away before the shining sun, and wild beasts of prey creep into their dens; so would all malice and hatred before this.

4. Consider that even your enemies were made originally after God's image, Gen. ix. 6. and they may be for all you know the objects of everlasting love; for whom special favour is secured by the eternal transaction. Love all men then, lest if ye hate any, ye be found to pitch your hatred where God has pitched his free love, and so be found fighters against God.

5. As there are readily none, but they have something desirable about them; so fix ye upon that, and love them for it, as ye will

love gold, though ye should find it in a mire. Beware lest the faults of others and their blemishes blind your eyes to their beauties and excellencies. It is unbecoming among those who have no beauty without blemish themselves.

6. Consider them rather as objects of pity and compassion, than of hatred. And this ye will do, if ye consider their enmity to you, more as a sin against God, than as a wrong to yourselves, Col. iii. 25. God is judge, and he will right all wrongs, and recompense every one according to his work.

7. *Lastly*, Consider the shortness of time, their and your own, Eccl. ix. 6. We have no time to spend in these petty quarrels of this world. Death will make them all to die out. Our enemies are but enemies for a day; night comes, and they are removed. And we ourselves go accordingly. Let us therefore be ready to go, in charity with all men, loving our enemies, that we may appear to be the children of God.

THE

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERS

OF

TRUE BELIEVERS.

VII. IN RELATION TO THEIR CARRIAGE IN A TIME OF ABOUNDING SIN, AND THEIR SAFETY IN A SUFFERING TIME.*

THE CHARACTER OF ZION'S MOURNERS.

EZEKIEL ix. 4.

And the Lord said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh, and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof.

[The first sermon on this text.]

DAYS of abounding sin usher in days of overflowing judgments. They are merry jovial days to the wicked and ungodly, who swim with the stream, and having the reins on their necks, give themselves the loose in the course of apostasy and irreligion: but they are heavy days to the serious godly, who dare not go along with the stream, but must oppose it, though their opposition cannot mend it, and therefore must issue in sighing and crying for it. But when the day of reckoning with the generation of God's wrath comes, the guise will turn, they shall get sorrow, and the seriously-godly shall rejoice.

Ezekiel prophesied in Babylon, to which he had been carried captive among those that were carried away several years before the completing of the captivity in the reign of Zedekiah. It would seem he was among those that were led captive in the time of Jehoiachin, 2 Kings xxiv. Those that are most dear to God may smart with the first in time of common calamity. Those that were

* The two sermons on this subject, were preached on occasion of a congregational fast, at Ettrick, March 31, 1725.

left, went on in their wickedness; and therefore Ezekiel is raised up in Babylon to prophesy of that utter overthrow which fell out in Zedekiah's reign, wherein the temple and holy city are sacked, and the land was laid desolate.

In the preceding chapter, the Lord shews Ezekiel in a vision the horrible abominations that people were yet going on in, chap. viii. 3. &c. and in this chapter he shews their terrible destruction by the Babylonians. This is represented by the destroying angels sent forth to kill; "They came from the way of the higher gate, which lieth toward the north, and every man a slaughter weapon in his hand," ver. 2. for their ruin was to be from Babylon.

In the text we have two things.

1. A party distinguishing themselves from others in a sinning time. And this they do by their exercise, not by any particular name of sect or party, but by their practice. Here we may observe,

(1.) The heavy exercise they have on their spirits at such a time. It is expressed by two words, both passive, importing that there is a load and a weight of grief and sorrow on them: which makes them sigh, when others laugh; oppresses their spirits, while others go lightly: and makes them cry. The word rather signifies to groan, as a deadly wounded man, who is hardly able to cry, Jer. li. 52. The sins of themselves and others pierce and wound their hearts, and they groan out their sorrows before the Lord, as under an evil which they are not able to remove. This word in the Hebrew, is in effect doubled, signifying, *that groan, that groan;* importing their fetching many a groan.

(2.) The ground of this their heavy exercise, *the abominations done in the midst thereof.* Jerusalem was the holy city, but the holy city was polluted with abominable wickedness of many sorts, whereby the name of God was dishonoured by a people called by his name. This made them sigh and groan. Not that they knew all the abominations done in it: but what they knew, all of it was heavy to them. and God constructed that to be mourning for what they knew not.

2. Here is God's distinguishing that party from others in a suffering time, seeing to their safety when the men with the slaughter-weapons were to go through. And here consider,

(1.) Who gives the orders concerning them, *The Lord said.* God takes notice of the mourning remnant among them; he books their prayers and complaints, he bottles their tears, and so has a particular eye upon them for their safety, when others are to be destroyed.

(2.) Who gets the orders about them, *He that was clothed with linen, having a writer's inkhorn by his side.* This is Jesus Christ, the Angel of the covenant, the Father's servant, the great High Priest,

to whom the people of God owe their temporal as well as their eternal salvation. He appears here in all his offices: he is among the destroying angels as a king; he is clothed in linen as a priest; he has a writer's inkhorn by his side as a prophet. Both he and they stand by the brazen altar, ver. 2. to shew that it was the profanation and slighting of the altar, a notable type of Christ, that was the great ground of the controversy with those who were to be destroyed: and that it was from thence, and not from their own sighs and cries that the safety of the mourning party was to come. The destroyers were six: the Saviour was but one; to shew that the far greater part of that people would fall, as being devoted to destruction.

(3.) The charge given concerning them. Whereof there are three parts.

[1.] To *go through the midst of Jerusalem*, the high streets. The mourners would be found there, by their carriage among others, testifying their dislike of the God-provoking abominations abounding among them. They were not ashamed to bear witness for God, and God will not be ashamed to own them.

[2.] To *set a mark upon them.* It is vain to inquire particularly into the nature of this mark; for all here was visionary. It is to be a direction to the destroyers whom to pass by and not to meddle with. And this is to be done before the destroying angels get the word to fall on, to shew the special care that God has of his own in the time of the greatest confusion. The Babylonians would not notice this mark, but over-ruling Providence would carry them by the persons so marked.

[3.] To set it *in their foreheads.* In the Egyptian destruction the mark was set on their door-posts, because their whole families were to be saved; but here it was to be set on their foreheads, because it was only designed for particular persons. Servants in the east had their master's name in their foreheads: and those who are sealed in their foreheads, God owns for his servants, while he treats the rest as enemies: compare Rev. vii. 3. The forehead is open to the view of all, which speaks the greater security of the marked ones, and that neither is God ashamed of them, nor ought they to be of him, even in the midst of dangers. The words afford the two following doctrines, viz.

Doctrine I. Times of abounding sin are heavy times, times of sighing and groaning to the serious godly, Zion's mourners.

Doctrine II. Those to whom sinning times are heavy times, making them sigh and groan, shall be marked for safety (by Jesus Christ) in suffering times.

I shall endeavour to explain and apply each of these doctrines in order.

DOCTRINE I. Times of abounding sin are heavy times, times of sighing and groaning to the serious godly, Zion's mourners.

In handling this doctrine, I shall,

I. Give the import of this exercise, and therein the character of Zion's mourners, to whom times of abounding sin are heavy times, times of sighing and groaning.

II. Show why such times are heavy times, times of sighing and groaning to them.

III. Conclude with some improvement.

I. I am to give the import of this exercise, and therein the character of Zion's mourners, to whom times of abounding sin are heavy times, times of sighing and groaning.

1. Zion's mourners are godly persons, who in respect of their state have come out from the world lying in wickedness, and joined themselves to Jesus Christ, 1 John v. 19. It is not to be expected, that while men lie still there, they will be mourners for the wickedness done among them. They that never truly repented for their own sin to this day, may indeed talk and inveigh against the sins of others, but cannot be kindly mourners with Christ's mark. In a time of abounding sin, they may bite and sting the sinners like serpents, as Satan reproving sin: but they can never mourn like doves over their abominations, Ezek. vii. 16.

2. Waking godly persons, not sleeping with the foolish virgins. Lot in Sodom was a mourner, and the ways of his neighbours were like thorns in his side, that kept him waking, 2 Pet. ii. 8. One may have the root of the matter in him, and yet being asleep he neither sees nor hears as he ought: and therefore cannot sigh and groan. And hence it comes to pass, that they may, with others, get a terrible wakening in the day of wrath; as sleeping Jonah did, when the storm arose.

3. Mourners for their own sins, Ezek. vii. 16. *mourning every one for his iniquity.* Mourning for sin begins at home, if of the right stamp. The man first mourns for and groans under the weight of the body of sin, Rom. vii. 24. and then under the weight of the sins of others; first over the sins of his own heart and life, and then over the sins of the land. This makes kindly mourning for the sins of the land: otherwise a man may be filled with anger and rage against them, as Jonah was against Nineveh, but not with Christian mourning.

4. Public-spirited persons, who are concerned to know how mat-

ters go in the generation wherein they live: how the interest of the gospel thrives, what regard is had to the law and honour of God, what case religion is in, whether Satan's kingdom is gaining or losing ground. For it is seeing and hearing that makes this sighing and groaning, as in the case of Lot, of whom it is said, 2 Pet. ii. 8. "That righteous man dwelling among the Sodomites, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day, with their unlawful deeds." Those who are concerned for nothing but their own particular affairs, and those whose concern is only as a matter of news, will neither of them be ranked among Zion's mourners but those who are concerned to hear or see, that they may be affected.

5. Tender persons, careful to keep their own garments clean in a defiling time, and dare not go along with the course of the times, Rev. iii. 4. They that row with the stream of a declining generation, follow the guise of the time, and will rather follow a multitude to do evil than be singular; they are none of Zion's mourners, nor Christ's marked ones. But either they bear the devil's mark; or if they belong to God, they will get a mark of God's anger against their way set upon them, as Lot got for his sojourning in Sodom.

6. Zealous persons, opposing themselves to the current of abominations, as they have access, Psal. lxix. 9. They will be conscientious to do what they can in their stations to stem the tide, Psal. lxxv. 4. "Saying unto the fools, Deal not foolishly; and to the wicked, lift not up the horn." They will look on themselves as called to be God's witnesses, and to contend for him, Prov. xxviii. 4. They that find no concern they have with the piety or impiety of others, but are ready to say, "Am I my brother's keeper?" that find no obligation on them to support the cause of God and religion in the world, can be none of Zion's mourners. The mark they bear is neutrality, which ranks them on the side of God's enemies, Matth. xii. 30.

7. *Lastly*, Persons affected at the heart for the sins of the generation, to the making of them sigh and groan on that account before the Lord, when no eye sees but the all-seeing One, Jer. xiii. 17. And this implies four things.

(1.) The abominations done, lie cross to the grain and disposition of their souls: otherwise they would not make them sigh and groan. They have a real hatred of them, wherever they appear, Psal. cxxxix. 21. They would fain see the world reformed, and the nauseous wickedness prevailing in it curbed; and they would heartily desire to have religion and sobriety get place.

(2.) They are a burden to their spirits, as vile and filthy things are to the senses. They make them sigh as oppressed with the

weight of them; Psal. lxix. 9. As they are a burden to the Spirit of God, so they are a burden to the spirits of the godly. Hence many times the wings of a dove, Psal. lv. 6, 7. and a lodge in the wilderness, Jer. ix. 2. are desirable: and it turns the world into a wilderness to them, making them long to be away from it.

(3.) They are wounds to their hearts, they groan like wounded men, Jer. xv. 18. Men know that, in other things, the seeing of matters go quite cross to their inclinations, and the desire and bent of their hearts, will be very wounding to them. No wonder then that the wicked course of a sinful generation be wounding to a gracious heart.

(4.) *Lastly*, Their grief vents itself in sighs and groans, as native indications of the affection of their hearts, as saith the apostle, 2 Cor. v. 4. "For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened."

II. I proceed to shew why such times are heavy times, times of sighing and groaning to Zion's mourners.

1. Because of the dishonour they see done to God by these abominations, Psal. lxix. 9. Whose heart would not rise to see his father that begat him affronted and treated with contempt without cause? And how can the hearts of the serious godly chuse but be moved to see their fellow-worms contemn their heavenly Father, casting dishonour upon him, trampling under foot his sacred laws, slighting his Son, and grieving and vexing his Holy Spirit? The relation betwixt God and the saints makes a sympathy, that what is done to the one is resented as done to the other.

2. Because of the wounds they see given to religion and the interest of Christ by these abominations, and the advantage they see accuring to the interest of the devil and his kingdom thereby, Rom. ii. 24. It is long since Michael and the dragon took the field one against another. The war is not yet ended, nor will be till the end of the world. Both armies are in the field, and the serious godly are concerned for the victory to fall to Christ's side; and therefore they take notice how the battle proceeds. And as the devil and his followers rage, when religion gets ground; no wonder the saints sigh and groan when it is otherwise. So that from the prevailing of abominations two arrows fly into a gracious heart.

(1.) An arrow of grief for the loss on Christ's side. Such abominations are done, and behold thereby the glory of the King of saints is darkened, the effect of his word of the gospel is marred, and a soul, perhaps several souls, are lost by it together, Eccl. ix. *ult.* "One sinner destroyeth much good."

(2.) An arrow of grief for the gain on the devil's side. So many abominations as are done in the midst of a land, so many trophies

are set up, as signs of Satan's victory over the kingdom of Christ. And that cannot but be moving to those whose hopes are all bound up in the kingdom of Christ, and the destruction of Satan's kingdom: though it is natural enough for those on Satan's side to rejoice.

3. Because of the fearful risk they see the sinners themselves run by these their abominations, Ps. cxix. 53. "Horror hath taken hold upon me, (says David) because of the wicked that forsake thy law." When Christ saw what a risk Jerusalem was running blindly, he wept over it saying, "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes," Luke xix. 41, 42. They eyes of the serious godly are open, and they see the hazard of a blinded generation, which they do not themselves. They see them running on the sword-point of vengeance, making haste to the pit, and will not be stayed; heaping up wrath against the day of wrath, and rushing to their eternal ruin. No wonder that knowing the terror of the Lord by their experience, and the preciousness of a soul, they sigh and groan to see souls so thrown away for a thing of nought.

4. Because of the contagion to others they see ready to spread from these abominations, Matth. xviii. 7. Eccl. ix. *ult.* Every one of them is an opening of the bottomless pit, by the steam of which many may be infected, and drop down into the same snare of the devil. O! the dismal consequences of the abominations done at first, may be by one sinner, as a little cloud like a man's hand, and may in time as it were darken the whole heavens. Men by one abomination may strike up a spring of abominations, that may run long after they are dead and rotten in their graves, as Jeroboam did. And the prospect of this occasions sighing and groaning to the serious godly.

5. Because of the judgments of God which they see may be brought upon those yet unborn, by reason of these abominations. Hence says the prophet, Hos. ix. 13, 14, "Ephraim, as I saw Tyrus, is planted in a pleasant place: but Ephraim shall bring forth his children to the murderer. Give them, O Lord: what wilt thou give? give them a miscarrying womb, and dry breasts. Many a man entails a curse on his family by his abominations; as appears by breaking the second commandment, by reason of which the Lord visits the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation, Exod. xx. 5. And the controversy may be pursued for his cause when he is in his grave. And if a stop be not put by repentance and reformation to the abominations and apostasies of this day, they will undoubtedly smart under them who are not yet born into the world, and the generation to come will have cause to pronounce a wo on this going before them, Matth. xxiii. 35, 36.

6. Because of the Lord's displeasure with the generation for these abominations, Jer. xv. 1. It is the joy of the serious godly, to see the tokens of God's good pleasure with the generation wherein their lot is cast, that the Lord will honour them, and take pleasure to dwell among them. But abounding abominations turn matters quite another way. If temporal strokes are kept off, they are left to pine away under spiritual plagues; God is provoked to depart, to withdraw his presence from his ordinances, and they are left to lament after the Lord. The glory departs by degrees, and who knows where it may end, if it may not go the length of removing the candlestick, as the Lord threatened he would do to the church of Ephesus, Rev. ii. 5.

7. *Lastly*, Because of the common calamity in which they see these abounding abominations may involve themselves and the whole land. The serious godly are sensible that with them also are sins against the Lord, and that God may justly proceed against them because of their iniquities. When then they see the cup of a land's iniquity fast filling by many hands, they have reason to be afraid of seeing it filled to the brim, and that it may run over even in their time. And however others may make a jest of the threatening of land-overflowing judgments, they dare not do it, Hab. iii. 16. And therefore the awful prospect of the day of the Lord's anger against the generation of his wrath, makes them sigh and groan.

I shall conclude at present with a short word of improvement.

O sirs! shew yourselves serious godly, by mourning over and sighing and groaning for the abominations done in the midst of the land. Turn from the God-provoking courses of this day, and go not in the way of the multitude, as ye would not perish with them; but labour to keep your garments undefiled, by standing at a distance from the abominations of the time; set yourselves in opposition to them, and mourn over the dishonours ye see and hear done to the holy name of God, as ever ye would have the mark of safety set on your foreheads.

The case of the generation affords much matter of mourning, if ye consider,

1. From whence we are fallen. The time was when the land was solemnly married to the Lord by covenant for reformation, and the Lord put a particular honour on Scotland by his presence in ordinances. But now reformation is out of sight, and matters are still going from evil to worse; so that if the Lord's hand do not interpose, it is hard to say where we will stop.

2. The unsuccessfulness of the gospel. There is little conviction,

and less conversion, by the preaching of the word. Most part of the generation are proof against warnings from providences and ordinances. Whatever light there may be, there is little heat.

3. The abounding of gross scandalous immoralities in the light of the gospel, the sacred name of God rent by horrid imprecations and blasphemies, his sabbaths profaned, murder, adultery, theft, perjury, and covetousness prevailing; while errors subversive of the foundation of Christianity, such as Arian, Socinian, and Arminian tenets, are vented, the purity of the doctrine of the gospel darkened, and put into an ill name, as if it were downright Antinomianism."*

4. Universality of the apostasy, a growing untenderness among all sorts, whereby causes of sorrow are multiplied among ministers and professors, among the young and aged; many pulling off their mask of religion, and throwing it by; and from the company of professors, communicants going over to the camp of the profane.

5. The incorrigibleness in it. A brow of brass, refusing to be ashamed, is added to all the defection that has taken place. People will not be reproved and convinced, but wilfully with a high hand go on in their sin. So that sighing and groaning is almost all that is left to do, for contending and striving are to little purpose.

6. *Lastly*, From all which there is plain evidence of fearful judgments abiding the generation, so much the more terrible as, after many deliverances there is a growing of the apostasy, and new deliverances do but make way to new steps farther forward in it. And national fasting and humiliation are grown out of use, but so far as they are called for by those who neither know nor can be supposed to know the state of this church and land with respect to these things. †

* It was at this time that Arianism and Socinianism were rampant in England, that Professor Simson at Glasgow broached Arianism under modern refinements, and that the preaching of pure apostolical doctrine was by some in the church branded with the name of Antinomianism.

† This relates to the church's not appointing fasts without the state, whose province it is to specify the causes of a religious fast. A neglect which there is still too much ground to complain of.

ADVICE TO ZION'S MOURNERS.

EZEKIEL ix. 4.

And the Lord said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh, and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof.

[The second Sermon on this text.]

AFTER a particular explication of these words, I observed, "That times of abounding sin are heavy times, times of sighing and groaning to the serious godly, Zion's mourners." Here I endeavoured to give the import of this exercise, and therein the character of Zion's mourners; and to shew why such times are heavy times to the people of that character. And I concluded with a short word of improvement. I shall now proceed further in the application.

USE I. Of information and instruction. Are times of abounding sin heavy times, times of sighing and groaning, to the serious godly, Zion's mourners? then,

1. Our time is a time that may be heavy, and ought to be a sighing and groaning time, and would be so if we had a heart for the duty of the day, being a day wherein "the Lord of hosts is calling us to weeping, and to mourning, and to baldness, and to girding with sackcloth," Is. xxii. 12. Whither can one that is serious look, but he must see matter of mourning? We have had long peace, and a long tack of the gospel, and have gathered much dross, fitting the church or land for a furnace of wrath. Iniquity abounds, but mourners for it are rare.

2. This blots out of the number of the serious godly, Zion's mourners, several sorts of persons, that must be put in another class.

(1.) Those who are so far from it, that by their profane and ungodly courses, of a piece with the rest of the abominations of the day, they afford cause of sighing and groaning to all the serious godly, that know them and their way. These by the text are of the number devoted to destruction; and assuredly they will find it so, if they turn not over a new leaf, and that sooner than they expect. Let them consider the case of the evil servant, Matth. xxiv. 48,—51. "If that evil servant shall say in his heart, My Lord delayeth his coming, and shall begin to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; the Lord of that servant shall come in a

day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of; and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." There is a wo denounced against such which will not fall to the ground, Luke xvii. 1. "It is impossible but that offences will come; but wo unto him through whom they come." Sighing and groaning is the necessary duty of the Lord's followers; but sad will be their reckoning who give them cause for it, ver. 2. "It were better for him that a mill-stone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones.

(2.) Those who pride themselves in their abominations, Psal. x. 3. "The wicked boasteth of his heart's desire, and blesseth the covetous, whom the Lord abhorreth." The consciences of men by nature are very untender, but by custom in sinning they come to be seared. Hence they arrive at sinning presumptuously, and with a high hand, and instead of being ashamed, glory in their wickedness. Under the law such were to be cut off, Numb. xv. 30. "But the soul that doth ought presumptuously (whether he be born in the land, or a stranger) the same reproacheth the Lord; and that soul shall be cut off from among his people." Compare Heb. x. 26, 27. "For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries." These are to be mourned over. Hence says the weeping prophet, Jer. xiii. 17. "But if ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride, and mine eyes shall weep sore, and run down with tears."

(3.) Those who make a jest of the abominations of the day, having a certain pleasure in the hearing of them, and improving them to make themselves merry with them. These are fools in God's account, Prov. xiv. 9, for *fools make a mock at sin;* and the practice is one of those found among those who are given over to a reprobate mind, Rom. i. ult. "Who knowing the judgment of God, (that they which commit such things are worthy of death) not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them." They must needs be of a disposition mighty contrary to the nature of God, and of his people, who rejoice at the abominable thing which God hates, and the serious godly sigh for.

(4.) Those who shew no concern about them, but give themselves up to a detestable neutrality, being Gallio-like, caring for none of these things. If they touch them indeed in their particular interest, they are very sensible of them, and ready to cry out under them: but if they do them no harm whatever dishonour they do to

God, or reproach they bring on the profession of Christianity, that is none of their business. What is that to us? say they. See how they are characterized by Elihu, Job xxxv. 9, 10. "By reason of the multitude of oppressions, they make the oppressed to cry: they cry out by reason of the arm of the mighty. But none saith, Where is God my maker, who giveth songs in the night?" These are Christ's enemies, as not being his friends: for, says he, "He that is not with me is against me: and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad," Matth. xii. 30. And they shall fare as these his enemies fared, Rev. iii. 16. "So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth."

(5.) *Lastly*, Those who whatever concern they shew for the abominations of the time, yet are not really affected with them in the sight of God. Though they may spare some words against them before men, yet their consciences can witness they have no serious sighs and groans to spare for them in secret before the Lord, Jer. xiii. 17. forecited. Truly this is a matter that will not do with a flourish of words. God knows the heart: and as the heart is, so is the man.

USE II. Of exhortation. Take a lift of the heavy case of this day and generation in respect of the abounding sin thereof, and sigh and groan on the account of it. Let it be your care to be found among the serious godly, Zion's mourners. And for this cause,

1. Awaken yourselves to a more close walk with God, from the observation of the abominations of the time, Rev. iii. 4. They that are not more than ordinary watchful in a declining time, can hardly miss to be stolen off their feet, Matth. xxiv. 12. "Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold." As then double gaurds are set where the hazard is greatest, so double diligence is requisite in such a time. Let the abounding sin of the time be like oil to the flame of your love to and zeal for God, to make it burn the more keenly, Psal. cxix. 126, 127. "It is time for thee, Lord, to work: for they have made void thy law. Therefore I love thy commandments above gold, yea, above fine gold."

2. Be ye more careful that ye partake not with them, but stand at a distance from all fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, Eph. v. 11. Many make it an argument for their doing so and so, because so many make no bones of it: but argue ye contrariwise, that since so many cast God's laws behind their back in such and such points, therefore ye must take the better heed ye be not carried away with the stream, and that ye must not give religion an outward cast, when it has so many enemies. But hear Christ saying to you, as John vi. 67. *Will ye also go away?* There are many ways how

in such a time people may draw in the contagion of the abominations of others: and therefore ye have the more need to take heed.

3. Awaken yourselves to a due concern for the public honour of the Lord Jesus, saying with David, Ps. lxix. 9. "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee, are fallen upon me." God is saying at such a time, *Who is on my side?* We have good reason to be on his side, and to account his honour dear to us, who counted not his precious blood too dear for us. When the war was proclaimed by heaven against the earth, he made the peace, becoming Immanuel, God with us. And shall not our souls find themselves concerned to be with him, on his side, in earth's war against heaven.

4. Awaken yourselves to a due concern for the case of perishing souls, and a sinking land, Hab. iii. 16. If ever we knew any thing of the terror of the Lord, we are too easy that way; we have too little bowels of compassion, else we would not shift to take a lift of the heavy case. It is inexcusable negligence and indolence, to confine our care to our own case in such clamant circumstances. This was not David's practice, for when deeply affected with his own soul's fall, he had the case of the church of God at heart, Ps. li. 18. "Do good, (says he) in thy good pleasure, unto Zion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem."

5. Contribute your endeavours, in your stations, to your power, to stem the tide of wickedness. "Say (as David did) unto the fools, Deal not foolishly; and to the wicked, Lift not up the horn," Ps. lxxv. 4. Beware of giving countenance in the least to the abominations of the day; but discountenance them as ye have any regard to the souls of sinners, and would not contribute to the hardening and ruining of them; and as ye have regard to your own souls, and would not involve them in the same.

6. Take serious thoughts of the heavy case in your private meditations, Jer. xiii. 17. foreceited. Think what a miserable pass the state of religion is brought to, by prevailing iniquity; how the kingdom of the devil thrives, in the midst of Christ's territories, and what, according to the scriptures, and the ordinary method of providence, must be the end of these things.

7. *Lastly*, Carry the case along not only to your family prayers, but to your secret prayers, where ye can lay it before the Lord with the greatest freedom. Let your eye affect your heart there in a special manner, and drop a tear for your own sins, and the sins of others. Yea, it would be very necessary, that, for your own case, and the case of the day, ye would use some times of extraordinary prayer. If you would do so, surely your labour would not be in vain.

I shall give you the following motives to press you to take such a lift of the heavy case of the day.

1. A gracious spirit is a holy and public spirit; and a predominant selfishness, whereby people are set only to satisfy their own lusts, and their care is confined only to their own private interest, is a black mark of an irregenerate state, according to what the apostle says, 2 Tim. iii. 2, 4. "Men shall be lovers of their own selves,—lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God." Accordingly our Lord says, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me," Matth. xvi. 24. Whoever can call God Father, their heart's desire and concern will be, that his kingdom come. Whoever is a child of the family of God, and has any interest in the privileges of it, must needs be concerned for its thriving, and for destroying the kingdom of the devil set up against it. Beware of Simon's selfishness, to whom the apostle Peter said, "Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God," Acts viii. 21.

2. Great is the dishonour done to God by the abominations of this day. God has been a kind and gracious God to Scotland, giving us the gospel, that has been hid from many greater nations: yet abominations prevail, as in a land of darkness. He has continued the gospel long with us; but for all the pains he has bestowed upon us, we are as a vineyard over-grown with thorns, the face thereof covered with nettles, and the stone-wall thereof broken down. "For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles, through us," Romans ii. 24. He has given peace, and plenty of the good things of this life, and they are improved against him. The silver and the gold are his, the corn and the cattle, our health and strength, and his debtors we are for every breathing: yet all these are sacrificed to men's lusts, and are used in contempt of God and neglect of him, to the treading his laws under foot, despising of his gospel, and slighting his ordinances. If there is any sense of God's greatness, or of gratitude for so many signal blessings, we would sigh and groan for all the abominations done in the midst of us.

3. Great is the hazard that many a precious poor soul is in by means of these abominations, Rom. i. 18. "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness." How is Satan at this day driving poor sinners in shoals to destruction? Half an eye may see a black cloud of wrath hanging over many a head of those wedded to some one abomination or other. They cannot sigh and groan for themselves; for either they do not see, and they

will not see, nor believe their hazard, though it be told them; or else their lusts have so got the mastery over them, that they must take their swing on all hazards, saying with those, Jer. ii. 25. "There is no hope. No, for I have loved strangers, and after them will I go." This may excite others to sigh and cry.

4. Great is the hazard of the rising generation from them; they are coming into a sad world, in a fast declining time. And what pitch the generation may be arrived at ere they come up, if a strong hand do not interpose, who knows? The generation now on the stage is become worse than their fathers. The wonders the Lord did for his people when they were in the iron furnace, are by this time much worn out of knowledge: most of those that were witnesses thereto are gone, and a generation is risen up that know not Joseph. The covenanted reformation of this church and land is dropping out of heart and head, by degrees: a religion that has no relation to Jesus Christ and the Spirit of God, is like to take place: and the flood of immorality is like to rise higher and higher. O sirs! sigh and groan for all the abominations of the day, for the sake of the rising generation, that they may not be infected therewith.

5. Great is the hazard of the judgments of God that the land is in by these abominations. An overflowing of abominations is a forerunner of an overflowing of national judgments. Hear what the mourning prophet says, Jer. v. 3, 4, 5, 9. "Thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction: they have made their faces harder than a rock, they have refused to return. Therefore I said, Surely these are poor, they are foolish: for they know not the way of the Lord, nor the judgment of their God. I will get me unto the great men, and will speak unto them; for they have known the way of the Lord, and the judgment of their God: but these have altogether broken the yoke, and burst the bonds. Shall I not visit for these things? saith the Lord: and shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?" And the longer national judgments are a-coming on, the heavier will they be when they do come. And whoso considers seriously the state of the land at this day, in respect of her abominations former and present, all lying together on our head, with the scripture threatenings against such a generation, can hardly miss fearing, that if God have thoughts of good towards the generations to come, a stroke is abiding this land, that as the bodies of some dead have been unjustly and dishonourably used by the living, in pulling them out of their graves; so the carcases of

many now living may yet come to lie as dung on the face of the ground, Jer. viii. 2.*

6. However many abominations there are that we know done in the land, there are many done no doubt that we know not. The former gives sufficient ground to sigh and groan; and the latter may add weight to that reason. When many abominations break out and are brought to light, as at this day, we may be sure that there are many besides that have never seen the sun. But these are all open to God, and are sinking weights on the places where they are done, and on the land. Compare Ezek. viii. and ix. And they will make them to vomit out the impenitent transgressors.

7. Our sins have had a hand in bringing matters to this pass, Tit. iii. 3; and therefore we are the more concerned to take a lift of the case. We have all mismanaged our mercies, misimproved our day of grace, and, by untenderness one way or other, provoked the Lord to go far from us, and to leave the generation to their swing to go from evil to worse. The conviction of this may press us to sigh and cry for all the abominations of the day: and if any refuse the conviction, be sure they will be made to take with it, nill they will they, when God riseth up to plead his controversy.

8. If ye do not sigh and cry for the abominations of this day, ye cannot escape being involved in the guilt of them, and consequently in the punishment to be inflicted on account thereof. See the text and context. In this case silence gives consent; ye will be held as consenting to all the dishonour done to God by them: for inasmuch as ye do not sigh and cry for them, ye give them your tacit approbation, Eph. v. 11. So the abominations of others will be laid on your score, and yet never make their burden one whit the lighter. And see the doom of the unmarked ones, Ezek. ix. 5, 6. "And to the others he said in mine hearing, Go ye after him through the city, and smite: let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity. Slay utterly old and young, both maids and little children, and women; but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at my sanctuary." Say not then, What can we do? Here is what ye must do, *viz.* sigh and groan on account of these abominations.

9. There will never one sincere sigh and groan of yours upon that

* That the author's apprehensions relating to such a melancholy event were not without some foundation, will appear, if it is considered, that about one and twenty years after the date of these sermons, the carcases of many of those who were engaged in the unnatural rebellion in 1745, raised against King George II. headed by a Popish pretender, met with some such treatment as is here alluded to: and these were the heirs and successors of those who had so treated the bodies of some of the saints in a former period.

head be lost; God will take notice of every one of them. Hence the psalmist says, Psal. lvi. 8. "Put thou my tears into thy bottle: are they not in thy book?" See what notice was taken of a serious few, whose sorrow of heart for the abominations of the generation they lived in, made them to speak often one to another, Mal. iii. 16. "The Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name." The all-seeing eye that takes notice of the least pleasant look his enemies give to abominations done, as he did in the case of the Edomites' envy to Israel, Obad. 12. will not overlook the sighs and groans of his friends on account of these abominations.

10. Sighing and groaning for abominations in a land, is fairer to put a stop to them than ye are aware of, one way or other. Those that sigh and groan for the abominations of others before the Lord, will in the event prove either their best friends or their most dangerous enemies. Prayers and tears are the weapons of the church, and never miss to have effect sooner or later. In a word, the sighs and groans of the people of God lie fair for recovering transgressors from their abominations. Christ groaned, and Lazarus was raised. They lament after the Lord, and the Lord will regard his people's lamentations; and if that Spirit were poured out, we might expect good (Is. lxvi. 8) that way, namely, sinners to be turned from their abominations. But if it should not have that happy effect, it would issue in providence shovelling presumptuous sinners out of the way, as it was in the case of Sodom, and so putting a stop to the current, 2 Pet. ii. 5, 6, 7. It is his people's appeal to the tribunal in heaven, which one may be sure will not lie undiscussed.

11. *Lastly*, Be sure it will turn to your private advantage, go what way it will. They that have a Christian concern for the sinful case of others, it will fare the better of it with their own. Hence David says, Psal. xxxv. 13, "But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth: I humbled my soul with fasting, and my prayer returned into mine own bosom." Thus ye will be amongst God's marked ones in the day of suffering, while now in the day of sinning taking your place amongst his sighing ones. This brings me to another doctrine, which I shall speedily discuss.

Doct. II. Those to whom sinning times are heavy times, making them sigh and groan, shall be marked for safety (by Jesus Christ) in suffering times.

On this point I shall,

I. Shew the import of Christ's marking his sighing and groaning people.

II. Give the reasons of his so marking them.

III. Deduce an inference or two.

I. I am to shew the import of Christ marking his sighing and groaning people. It imports,

1. His taking a particular notice of them, and their carriage in the sinning time, Rev. iii. 4. "Thou hast a few names even in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy." They are his hidden ones, and the great piece of their heavy exercise is secret. But never a sigh or groan they utter but he knows it. However they be hid among a crowd, none of them are missed or overlooked.

2. His owning them for his own, Mal. iii. 17. "They shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels." And he owns them,

1*st*, As his own and his Father's servants, Rev. vii. 3, while others are observed by him to be serving their lusts, serving the times, and serving their own private worldly interest.

2*dly*, As his friends, those on his side in the war, while others are his enemies, having neither the word nor the sign.

3*dly*, As his treasure to be kept and preserved, while others are lost. Though they be the world's outcasts, they are his jewels, precious in his esteem, Mal. iii. 17.

And this owning signified by the marking, has respect to,

(1.) The time present wherein abominations abound, and God exerciseth patience, and they are left to sigh and groan, and are apt to think they are forgotten.

(2.) The suffering time coming; then he will own them, Mal. iii. 18. "Then shall ye return and discern between the righteous and the wicked; between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not." When the Lord's anger is going out in a flame, yet then he will look on them with a pleased countenance as his own.

(3.) The time betwixt and the suffering time. For the mark once set on, is never lost. Though they have a heavy time to go through, he will own them as his.

3. His securing them, come what will. They shall be safe, as God's own people marked for safety.

Concerning this we may observe in general, that safety from trouble is sometimes the lot of God's mourners. Noah sighed in a sinning time, and God made him safe in a suffering time. There was an ark provided for him and his family, when the deluge came, and swept away the whole race of men. God can provide a hiding place to his people when the world is involved in the utmost chaos

of confusion and disorder. If we look to the providence of God, there will be found no random shots in the world. In a shower of bullets, there is none that can hit but where providence has marked its destination, Psal. xci. 7. "A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand: but it shall not come nigh thee."

Frequently there is a mitigation of their trouble, when it befals them. Though they drink of the cup it shall be of the brim, not of the bottom or dreggy part. The rod shall be to them the rod of a man, a weak man, that lays on but a slender stroke.

And they shall be safe from the sting of trouble. They will have ease within, though trouble without, Hab. iii. 16. When others are tossed with fears without, and terror within, and the guilty conscience is sounding an alarm within their sinful breasts, they shall have a feast in the sense of the Lord's goodness, at least in dependence on the promise. More particularly, this securing has a view,

1*st*, To public calamities in time. He will either (1.) Take them out of harm's way, before it come, as he did good king Josiah. Or, (2.) He will preserve them when it comes, as he did Lot from the destruction that overwhelmed Sodom and Gomorrah, and Jeremiah from being carried away captive to Babylon. Or (3.) Whatever their share in the public troubles be, they shall be happy in the divine favour, under the covert of the covenant of grace, which is a covenant of peace to all who have taken hold of it. Thus it fared with Jeremiah, chap. xv. 11. "The Lord said, Verily it shall be well with thy remnant, verily I will cause the enemy to intreat thee well in the time of evil, and in the time of affliction." Josiah got a promise of dying in peace, 2 Kings xxii. 20. but he died in battle; yet the promise stood firm; for they die in peace, die as they will, who die in a state of reconciliation with God in Christ. They make a blessed exchange that get to heaven for their hiding-place, go the times as they will.

2*dly*, To the great day when wrath shall come to be poured out on the wicked world in full measure, Mal. iii. 17. "And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels, and I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him." Not one drop of that wrath shall fall upon them; but they shall enter upon the possession of all that blessedness and felicity which their Redeemer purchased for them at the price of his blood. Then will the joyful invitation be given them, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world," Matth. xxv. 34.

II. The reasons of Christ's marking his sighing and groaning people, are shortly these.

1. Because they are his redeemed ones, being redeemed to God by his blood; and his Spirit in them shews the blood sprinkled on them; so that no destruction can befal them.

2. Because he loves them, having loved them with an everlasting love, and drawn them to him with the bands of love and the cords of a man; and he will love them to the end. He sympathizes with them in all their troubles, and will see to their comfort and safety.

3. His own honour is engaged for their preservation and safety, that the world may see they serve a good Master, and that it is not in vain to row against the stream of a backsliding generation.

An inference or two shall conclude all.

1. Hence see that none shall be losers at Christ's hands, however heavy hearts they get for his sake. The tables will be turned, Is. lxv. 13, 14. "Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, my servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry: behold, my servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty: behold, my servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be ashamed: behold, my servants shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall howl for vexation of spirit."

2. Here we may see that upright walking is sure walking in the worst of times. It is better to sigh and groan with the remnant, than rejoice with the multitude, in the time of the apostasy of a generation: "for it shall be well with the righteous, but ill with the wicked. They that sow in tears, shall reap in joy."

THE

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERS

OF

TRUE BELIEVERS.

VIII. IN RELATION TO THEIR FRIENDSHIP TO CHRIST, AND EVIDENCING IT, BY DOING WHATSOEVER HE COMMANDS THEM.*

BELIEVERS THE FRIENDS OF CHRIST.

JOHN XV. 14.

Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.

IN these words we have two things.

1. A high and honourable privilege which some enjoy: they are *Christ's friends.* It is a relation, and a kindly and honourable one. Some are his enemies, and he will treat them as such, saying, "Those mine enemies which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me," Luke xix. 27. Yea all are so by nature, Rom. viii. 7, "The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." But there is a party of mankind brought into a state of friendship with him, whom he has done and will do the office of the best of friends to.

2. The character of those who enjoy that privilege. Many are pretenders to it; but few can make it out. Here is the badge they bear, the sign they are known by, *If ye do whatsoever I command you.* Those who bear it, Christ will own. This character Christ lays before his disciples and all the visible church, (1.) That they may strive to answer it, as ever they would evidence to the world, and their own consciences, this relation. (2.) That they may at

* These sermons were preached at Ettrick in June and July, 1724; and were begun June 21, the Lord's day immediately after the author's finishing his dicourses on the covenant of grace.

times examine themselves by it, and so clear their interest in him: "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you."

The character is taken from practice. Friends must show themselves friendly. This Christ's friends do by *doing whatsoever he commands them.* This doing is not the foundation of the friendship: that is faith applying Christ's reconciling blood, Rom. v. 10, 11: but it is the fruit of the friendship, and therefore follows after it. It necessarily springs from it, and so manifests and makes it known, as the fruit doth the tree. So John viii. 31. "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed. Heb. iii. 14. We are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end." Thus obedience is not the condition upon which the privilege is obtained; but there is a necessary connection betwixt the privilege and the duty, which is all that the *if* here signifies: as if one should say, If there is smoke, there is fire; if there is good fruit, there is a good tree. Now observe here,

(1.) The character itself, universal obedience to the commands of Christ. Christ our Friend is our Lord and our God: he requires obedience of us: he must command, and we must obey, and that without exception, with unlimited obedience. The friendship betwixt Christ and his people reserves still the distance of Sovereign and subjects, Psal. xlv. 11. *He is thy Lord, and worship thou him.*

(2.) The decision on this character, "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." (1.) In that case, ye really are, and prove yourselves to be my friends. Fair words and a profession will not do it; but the practice of a friend will do it; and sincere obedience is the touchstone of friendship to Christ. (2.) Ye shall be owned to be real friends. Christ himself will take it as full evidence of your friendship to him.

The substance of this text may be summed up in the three following observations.

Doct. I. It is the privilege of some of mankind-sinners to be the friends of Christ.

Doct. II. It is the distinguishing character of the friends of Christ to do whatsoever he commands them.

Doct. III. They are the friends of Christ, who are in a gospel-sense universal in their obedience to his commands.

I shall handle each doctrine in order.

Doct. I. It is the privilege of some of mankind-sinners to be the friends of Christ.

In discoursing from this doctrine, I shall shew,

I. What this privilege is in general.

II. How this friendship is made up.

III. What a privilege this is.

IV. Make application.

I. I am to shew what this privilege is in the general. It is a state of peace and oneness of interest with Jesus Christ. In these two it lies, as is evident from the common nature of friendship.

1. The friends of Christ, whereas naturally they were in a state of enmity with God, they are now in a state of peace with Christ, and God through Christ, Eph. ii. 14. "For he is our peace who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us." All the children of Adam in their natural state, the elect not excepted, are in a state of enmity with God. God bears a legal enmity against them, as the judge against the criminal whom he condemns, according to law: and they have a real enmity against him appearing in their hearts, Rom. viii. 7. and in their works, Col. i. 31. But now those enjoying this privilege are now in a state of peace and reconciliation with God. God's legal enmity against them is now removed; he condemns them no more, there being *no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus*, Rom. viii. 1. The countenance of the wrathful Judge is now laid by as to them. And their real enmity against him is removed too, out of their hearts and lives, that it reigns no more, Col. i. 21, 22. "You that were sometime alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable, and unreproveable in his sight." So that most dangerous fever in their case, is cooled.

2. Whereas they had divided interests as to heaven, now there is an unity of interests betwixt Christ and them, 1 John i. 3. "Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." Many are at peace, who yet are not in a state of friendship: so this is more than to be at peace with God simply. When Christ makes up the peace with sinners, he enters into a friendship with them: there is an alliance, a covenant betwixt God and them, offensive and defensive: their interests are woven together from that moment: they have common friends and common enemies. Christ espouses their interests, and they espouse his; and they mutually pursue the interests of one another as a common interest.

II. The next head is, How this friendship is made up.

1. The first spring and source of it is everlasting free love. Hence says the Lord to the prophet, Jer. xxxi. 3. "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love." It is as ancient in the design of it as from eternity. Sometimes one friend will say to another, When I saw you in such a place, or at such a time, there was some-

thing in you that I liked extremely, and from that time I was still desirous of a friendship with you. So Christ may say to his people, Since I saw you from eternity, lying in the corrupt ruined mass of mankind, I liked you, my delights were with the sons of men, Prov. viii. 31.

2. The plot for compassing it was laid from eternity between the Father and the Son, Tit. i. 2. "In hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie, promised before the world began." The covenant of grace was made for bringing about this friendship: the method was there laid down, how, with the honour of the divine perfections, these enemies to God might be brought into a state of friendship; how they might be won into it.

3. The foundation of it was laid in the blood of Christ, in the fulness of time, Gal. iv. 4, 5. "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." The friendship with them, as little worth as they were, could not be purchased, but by blood that might satisfy justice; for they were criminals under a sentence of death; Heb. ix. 22. "Without shedding of blood is no remission." So Christ died for them, and gave them the greatest demonstration of friendship for them; therefore says he, John xv. 13. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." Hence we are often said to be redeemed by his blood.

4. It was moved to them in the gospel, 2 Cor. v. 20. "We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. In the word of the gospel Christ courts the acquaintance of sinners, and proposes a strict friendship betwixt him and them. He sends his letters to them in the written word for that effect, which many times have remained unanswered, or got an ill answer. He sends some of their own acquaintance, earthen vessels, to prevail with them to enter into this friendship, who many times labour in vain. But he continues his solicitations till he win them.

5. They are won to it by his own Spirit, Is. xliv. 3, 5. "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring. One shall say, I am the Lord's: and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob: and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel." They will not be friends with him, till the Spirit take the work in hand. Their old friends, the devil, the world, and their lusts, have the ascendant so over them, that they cannot value Christ's friend-

ship, till the Spirit open their eyes, display it to them, and change their minds and hearts: and he does it effectually when once he takes it in hand.

6. By faith they go into the friendship with him, Eph. iii. 17. "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." So they come to him, and unite with him. And thus the bonds of the friendship are the Spirit on Christ's part, whereby he apprehends them, and faith on their part, whereby they lay hold on him. So the friendship is made up inviolable and most strict, and Christ and they are in the bond of the same covenant; he as the head, and they as the members.

7. *Lastly*, The friendship is sealed by the sacraments, particularly that of his body and blood. It was an ancient custom to confirm a covenant of friendship with a feast, Gen. xxxi. 54. And so the Lord has been confirming his friendship with his true friends among us of late, saying, as Cant. v. 1. "I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse; I have gathered my myrrh with my spice, I have eaten my honey-comb with my honey, I have drunk my wine with my milk: eat, O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved." And O how fit is it to confirm the friendship! Can there be a greater instance of friendship than what is there! John xv. 13. forecited.

III. I go on to shew what a privilege this is. Men nor angels cannot fully express the value of it, for it is of infinite value, 1 Cor. ii. 9. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." To raise your esteem of it, consider,

1. It is an honourable friendship. Many value themselves to little purpose on their great friends, while perhaps they and their friends both are enemies to God, and though they have greatness, want grace. But the believer may justly, yea only, value himself on his friends, 1 Cor. i. *ult. He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.* Their Friend is the Prince of the kings of the earth; and through him God is their friend. They are allied to heaven: though they were come of the dunghill, the blood-royal of heaven runs in their veins.

2. It is a beneficial friendship. The friendship of many in the world is no more but an empty name: if a good word will serve their friend, they will give it him, but for any good deed, it is far from them, Jam. ii. 16. Yea, the friendship of many is destructive; it serves for nothing but to be a snare, a trap, and a bond of iniquity, Jam. iv. 4. as between Herod and Pilate. But Christ's friendship is most beneficial: it is enriching and upmaking. The benefits of it who can tell? they will tell out for time and eternity;

they are for the soul and for the body. One needs no more to make him happy: they are for prosperity, and for adversity.

3. It is an intimate friendship. There is no such close and intimate friendship betwixt any relations on earth, 1 Cor. vi. 17. *He that is joined unto the Lord, is one spirit.* Many whose friendship is very valuable and beneficial, are very reserved even to their friends, allowing them little intimacy with them. But Christ communicates himself most intimately to his friends, lodges his greatest secrets with them, Psal. xxv. 14; and they on the other hand pour out their hearts to him, with greater freedom than they can do to their nearest relations, where oft-times they find it necessary to be on the reserve.

4. It is an universal friendship, of universal influence. There is no friendship in the world, but it is limited to some particulars. There are some things to which men's friendship doth not extend, and in which they do not concern themselves with their friend. But Christ's friendship is of universal influence: from the greatest to the least of the concerns of his friends, he interests himself; he manages all about them in a friendly manner; from their eternal salvation, to the least hair falling from their head. And there is no case wherein one can come wrong to him for help.

5. It is a sure and lasting friendship. The friendships in the world are very uncertain. Sometimes the greatest friendship ends in great enmity, and often doth it degenerate into a coolness and indifferency: and rarely doth it fall out, but adversity slackeneth the bond, if not puts it loose for altogether. Hence proceed the complaints of the saints, Job xix. 14. "My kinsfolk have failed, and my familiar friends have forgotten me." Psal. xxxviii. 11. "My lovers and my friends stand aloof from my sore: and my kinsmen stand afar off." But Christ's friendship never dies out, John xiii. 1. "Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end." He may hide his love from his people, but never lifts it away from them. Hence is that comfortable passage, Is. xlix. 14, 15, 16. "Zion said, The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me. Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands, thy walls are continually before me." They may grieve his Spirit, and he may correct them with the rod: but the sharpest rod on their backs is a friendly one; the heaviest hand he lays on them, is still the hand of a friend, not of an enemy, Psal. lxxxix. 31.—34. And their adversity is so far from making his friendship cool toward them, that he bears a part with them in all

their burdens; *in all their afflictions he is afflicted;* and while he smites with the one hand, he supports with the other. He afflicts not willingly; and he turns all their bed in their sickness.

A short word of improvement shall conclude this doctrine.

USE I. of information. Hence see,

1. The wonderful condescension of heaven to mankind-sinners, in that God was pleased to take any of them into friendship with him. The angels fell, but there was no offer of peace for them, no Saviour provided: but men may not only be at peace, but in friendship with God. We are rebels to God naturally, but may become friends through Christ.

2. They that are Christ's are most happy. They are provided with a stock, upon which they may travel through all difficulties, and make their way through all storms. Christ is their Friend, and he is both able and willing to provide for them. And they may travel comfortably through all, if they had faith in exercise to improve the friendship.

3. Jesus Christ is the best and most generous of masters. He makes all his servants friends; he treats them generously. He needs none of their service; none of their service can make him more happy: but he rewards their service nobly. O! who would not choose to have such a friend? who would not serve such a liberal Master?

4. How friendless persons, who have none to regard them, may best bestow themselves, and get a friend, that will be better to them than all the world. Come to Christ, O friendless sinners! for the fatherless find mercy in him, even the outcasts of Israel, whom no body cares for. Come to him, and he will shew you the most disdinguishing marks of friendship, more eminent than those that ever took place among men.

USE II. Of exhortation.

1. Let sinners seek this friendship. Christ, in the days of his flesh, was called "*a friend of publicans and sinners:* and it was so far true, that he was and is ready to befriend sinners, to save them from their sins, but not to befriend them in their sins. Here is a privilege, and the worst of sinners may obtain it in the way of believing now, as well as many have done heretofore; witness Manasseh, Mary Magdalen, Paul, yea the whole of those that are now the redeemed from among men, sitting at his right hand in glory. But if ye continue in your state of enmity against him, ye will find at last that he will treat you as enemies: and as he is the best of friends, if you remain impenitent, he will be the most dreadful of enemies, and consign you to everlasting burnings. Accept of his friendship therefore in time.

2. Ye that profess to be the friends of Christ, walk worthy of your privilege. Carry yourselves friendly towards him. Discover it by your respect to his commands, submission to his will in all things, and employing him in all your needs. And do not pretend to be his friends, while ye are regardless of keeping his way. Ye must distinguish yourselves from his pretended friends, by a sincere and universal obedience to whatsoever he says or enjoins in his word.

Doct. II. It is the distinguishing character of the friends of Christ, to do whatsoever he commands them.

In handling this doctrine, I shall,

I. Inquire into this character of the friends of Christ, of doing whatsoever he commands them.

II. Shew why this is made their trying and distinguishing character.

III. Conclude with some practical improvement.

1. I shall inquire into this character of the friends of Christ, of doing whatsoever he commands them. I take it up in three things.

First, The friends of Christ are doers of his commands. They are all his servants, Luke vi. 46. Christ is their Lord and Lawgiver, and they do his commandments, Rev. xxii. 14. His enemies may feign submission; they may say fair, and profess obedience to him: but his friends are doers of what he commands, in a holy life and practice, Jam. i. 22. It imports the following things.

1. Their lusts are not their domineering lords, to whom they yield themselves to obey, Rom. vi. 13, 14. If they have become Christ's friends, they are become enemies to their lusts, seeking the pleasing of Christ, and the destruction of their corrupt affections, saying, "O Lord our God, other lords besides thee have had dominion over us: but by thee only will we make mention of thy name, Is. xxvi. 13. They that are Christ's, have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts," Gal. v. 24. *To walk after one's own lusts*, is the character of *scoffers*, 2 Pet. iii. 3. Christ's friends have changed masters, and renounced their own will and corrupt affections.

2. The course of the world is not their rule, Eph. ii. 2. It has the force of a command on Christ's enemies: hence so frequent is the following a multitude to do evil, as if the commonness of a sin did licentiate it. But Christ's commands contradict the course of the world, and his friends will obey them over the belly of the torrent of the example of a godless generation, as Noah did, Gen. vi. 9.

3. But as they look for salvation by him, it is the business of their life, to please, serve, and glorify him, to *walk worthy of the Lord, unto all pleasing*, Col. i. 10. There are two works seriously

plied by all Christ's friends. (1.) Salvation-work, that they may be saved from sin and wrath, and set beyond hazard of eternal ruin. This is done by faith. (2.) Their generation work, *serving their generation by the will of God*, as David did, Acts xiii. 36; that they may be useful for Christ in their day, to advance his honour and glory, "Showing forth the praises of him who hath called them out of darkness into his marvellous light, 1 Pet. ii. 9. This is done by obedience. In the former they look for their own safety, and in the latter for the honour of their Saviour. Christ's enemies either slight both, or if they seem to be concerned for the former, that is all, they have no due concern for the latter. Why? because they have no regard to the honour of Christ, but to their own salvation. Here lies the mystery of the inconsistent lives of many, who pray like angels, and yet live like devils, as if there were no God to whom obedience were due. But Christ's friends pursue both, and labour to serve and obey him, with the same earnestness as to be saved by him; and so are doers of all his commandments, as well as seekers of his salvation.

This is evident, if ye consider,

1*st*, That all Christ's friends are true believers in him, endowed with saving faith, being *called, and chosen, and faithful*, Rev. vii. 14. For by faith it is that one enters into the state of friendship with him. And all real believers are doers of Christ's commands, making it their business to obey him. For *faith without works is dead*, Jam. ii. 20. True faith is a working grace, *working by love*, Gal. v. 6. For it knits the soul to Christ, in whom is the fulness of the Spirit of holiness, Eph. iii. 17; joins to him as to a husband, whose spouse is always fruitful, Rom. vii. 4; as the true vine, making branches really united to it, bring forth fruit, John xv. 2. And so faith is virtually all good works. Hence Christ says, John vi. 29. "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." And says the beloved disciple, 1 John iii. 23. "This is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ." And it receives Christ as a King, Lord, and Head, Psal. cx. 3.

2*dly*, The very end for which Christ purchased the friendship of heaven to any, and actually communicates it to them, is, that they might be doers of his commands. He laid down his life to purchase it for that cause. Hence says the apostle, Eph. v. 25, 26. "Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it: that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by his word. Tit. ii. 14. Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." He brings them forth from among his and their enemies, for the

same end, Luke i. 74, 75. "That he would grant unto us, (said Zacharias) that we being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life." It was their misery while they were his enemies, that they neither would nor could do his commands: but in the day of their reconciliation he delivers them, knocks off their chains, and gives them both heart and hand in some measure for obedience.

3. Regardlessness of Christ's commands, and walking contrary to them, is the native product of the enmity of heart against him. This is the very way how men evidence themselves enemies to him: for it is walking contrary to him. What is the reason that men cannot be subject to the holy law? Their enmity to God, a transcript of whose nature it is, Rom. viii. 7. They will be their own lords, and will not leave Christ to reign over them: they are his enemies, Luke xix. 27. Men may pretend esteem of Christ, while they are regardless of his commands: but all such pretences are vain, Col. i. 21.

4*thly*, Where there is friendship there is love without dissimulation; and where there is love, there will be care to please the party beloved. Christ puts our love on this trial, John xiv. 15. *If ye love me*, says he, *keep my commandments*. And it is a most rational convincing trial. What man among us would reckon one to love us who were still walking contrary to us, grieving and vexing us with doing the things which we cannot endure? An unholy life is grieving to the Spirit of Christ: it is a smoke in his nostrils. How then can men pretend love or friendship to him, who are regardless of his holy laws? Whatever we call love to God, see what he calls so, 1 John v. 3. "This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments."

Secondly, The friends of Christ are doers of his commands, because they are his commands; as his will is the rule of their obedience, so it is the reason of it too: "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." This is what touches the hearts of his friends, and sets the wheels of their souls in motion in obedience: That he commands it, that he requires it, Col. iii. 17. "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." Christ's pretended friends sometimes do what he commands; but it is not from any regard to him, but to themselves. But real regard to Christ weighs with his friends. This imports, that,

1 They do his commands out of respect to his authority, Psal. cxix. 4. "Thou hast commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently." They perceive the impress of a divine authority on every command, and in compliance with that authority close with the duty enjoined.

Hence where they cannot see any reason for a command, but that such is the will of Christ, they find even there sufficient ground for obedience: as being those who are not to dispute his commands, but obey them; those to whom the will of the great Lawgiver is reason enough, Heb. xi. 8. "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out not knowing whither he went."

2. They do his commands out of love to him. Hence we read of their "work and labour of love, shewed toward his name," Heb. vi. 10. Being saved by his blood, they give themselves to be ruled by his laws, and obey him from love and gratitude, *the love of Christ constraining them*, 2 Cor. v. 14. Love lines the yoke of Christ to believers, and makes it sit easy on his friends, while it is very grievous to his enemies, John v. 3. And the stronger faith is, the stronger is love; and the stronger that love to Christ is, the soul is the more ready for duty. His commands are acceptable to them, because they are his.

3. They do his commands as sons redeemed by his blood, not as bond-servants working for their own redemption; to please their Benefactor, not to render themselves accepted by their own obedience, Rom. viii. 15. Col. i. 10. Christ has brought in everlasting righteousness by his obedience, and put it on all his friends, whereby they stand accepted to God: and he commands them, being righteous through faith, to be holy; and their souls say, as 2 Cor. vii. 1. "Having these promises, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." The mercy of God, and the love of Christ in dying for sinners, makes them to say, "What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits towards me?"

4. *Lastly*, They do his commands with heart and good-will, Eph. vi. 7. and that is the obedience only that is acceptable, Isa. lxiv. 5. "Thou meetest him that rejoiceth, and worketh righteousness." What is done for Christ's sake by his friends, will be done heartily; while the obedience of his pretended friends, his real enemies, is done against their will. The cords of love will draw swiftly and easily: and what backwardness to duty is found at any time, will be grievous to them.

It is evident there can be no acceptable obedience but what is done this way, done because Christ commands it: for if it have not a respect to his command, it may indeed contain the matter of obedience, but is destitute of the form and essence of godly obedience. Thus we see selfish ends mar obedience, Matth. vi. 1. God knows the springs of our obedience, however close they lie within our breasts;

and he will never acknowledge that to be obedien ce tohim, that is not influenced by his authority, and has not him for its end.

Thirdly, The friends of Christ are doers of his commands universally and without exception, Psal. cxix. 6. "Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect to all thy commandments." Their obedience to Christ is unlimited as to an absolute Lord. His friends will prescribe no bounds of their obedience, but what he sets in his holy law. The obedience of hypocrites is ever defective here; they never want some secret reserve, which proves their ruin. Here then is the trial of Christ's true and pretended friends. It is certain that there is no obedience on earth legally universal: but all the friends of Christ give him universal obedience in a gospel-sense. That is,

1. They are universal in their desire to do all his commands, saying, as Psal. cxix. 5. "O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes!" Perfect holiness is the desire of their souls, the aim and design which they have in view, though still they cannot as yet reach the mark. Every sin is a burden, and lies on them as an iron chain; and there is no lust they would not fain be quit of, Rom. vii. 24. Some sins lie nearer them than others, and they have greater difficulty to shake them off than others. Christ says that the right eye must be plucked out, with thine own consent. Amen, says the friend of Christ. Hypocrites have always some lust which they desire not to part with; there is some part of Christ's yoke that they cannot away with. It is no more a burden to them than a gold chain about the neck, which one would be very loath to quit. They hate not every false way.

2. They are universal in respect of their endeavour to do all, to comply with every part of Christ's will; "I count not myself to have apprehended, (says Paul) but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus," Phil. 13, 14. Many please themselves with faint and lazy wishes to do all: but it is one thing to wish to do whatever Christ commands; and another to aim at it in suitable endeavours, to try one's strength at every known duty, and to put hand to work, though they cannot go cleverly through it. It is the ruin of many souls, that they put off themselves with lazy wishes, but never once try in earnest the mortification of some known lust, or setting about some known duty. But Christ's friends are universal in their endeavours.

3. They are universal in respect of their willingness to know all that Christ commands, that they may do it, Psal. cxxxix. 23. "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me and know my

thoughts." It is the voice of Christ's friends, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Acts ix. 6. And hence, where the command of Christ appears in any particular, they set themselves to receive and obey it. There is a great deal of deceit among men in this point. Most men stave off the discovery of those sins which they have no mind to part with; they strive to blind their consciences, that they may enjoy their sinful courses without disturbance: they lodge some lusts under disguise, willing to give them heart-room, but unwilling to know what they are.

The reasons why Christ's friends are universal in their obedience, are,

1. Because the grace of God inclines them to do what Christ commands, because he commands it, Psal. cxix. 4. forecited. And he that does one thing, because of the authority of Christ requiring it, will endeavour to do all; for the authority of God is equal in all, Jam. ii. 11. The least coin that has the king's stamp on it, is current among the subjects as well as the greatest. The law of Christ is a chain of many links, and he that truly draws one to him, draws all; wherefore the Jewish rabbies say, "He that saith, I receive the whole except one word only, despiseth the commandment of God."

2. Because the whole law is written on their hearts in regeneration, and not scraps of it here and there, Heb. viii. 10. The new nature is suited to whatever Christ commands, because it is his own image drawn on the soul: it answers the law as the wax does the seal. Hence it is called *a new man, the new creature*, wherein all things are become new: and there is a perfection of parts, though not of degrees.

3. Because Christ hath the chief room in their hearts beyond all competitors. His interest with his friends weighs down all other interests, Luke xiv. 26. The world and cursed self have the predominant interest in the hearts of most men: hence Christ's commands must give place to theirs, and religion and conscience must bow at the foot of their desire to please men, their covetousness pride, and passion. But in the hearts of his friends all other sheaves must bow to his, and so the commands of others must give place to the commands of Christ.

4. Because he is jealous, and the least command of his that is slighted is displeasing to him, Matth. v. 19. And a tender conscience will beware of displeasing him. Many a time God's people find in their experience the danger of tampering with some bosom idol. It provokes him to depart, till they return and acknowledge their sin, Psal. lxvi. 18. Therefore says the spouse, Cant. iii. 5. "I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes, and by

the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up nor awake my love, till he please."

5. *Lastly*, Because their hearts are reconciled to the whole law, and every part of it. Their practical judgment approves it as good in itself, and good for them too, Psal. cxix. 128. "I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right." And hence there is a sincere endeavour to conform to it in all the parts thereof. There is a transcript of God's image in it, which the gracious soul longs for the drawing of upon it; so every command as a lineament of that image must be precious to them. Thus the character is established.

II. The next head is to show, why this is made the trying and distinguishing character of the friends of Christ.

1. Because this hits the point in which the sincere and hypocrites differ, whether they be gross or close hypocrites. Look on both in their profession of love and friendship to Christ, and the hypocrite will vie with the sincere in it. The foolish virgins have lamps as well as the wise; the foolish man's building may be as high as the wise builder's is; the one wears the external badge of the Christian name, and of the sacraments, as well as the other. But follow them to their practice, and there they part.

The gross hypocrite has the name of a Christian, but nothing of the life and practice of one. He will call Christ *Lord, Lord*, but makes no conscience of *doing the things that he saith*. He will cry, *The temple of the Lord*, and yet will *steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely*, Jer. vii. 8, 9. His profession is sacred, but his practice is profane. He will own Christ for his Lord, but in the mean time makes no bones of trampling his holy commandments under foot. The sincere soul dare not do this: since he abides in Christ, he must endeavour to walk as he also walked. He must be obedient to his Lord, Head, and King.

The close hypocrite who does indeed many things which Christ commands, so that the world cannot determine him to be insincere; yet he never does all in known duty: his obedience is always wanting in some material part; and what he does, he doth not because of the regard he hath to the will of Christ, but the regard he has to himself. Whereas the sincere aims at and endeavours compliance with the whole will of God, and that because it is his will, Acts xiii. 22.

2. Because the reality of friendship to Christ does without controversy appear here. Solomon observes, Prov. xxvi. 23, "Burning lips, and a wicked heart, are like a potsherd covered with silver dross." Will any man reckon one his friend, because he speaks him fair;

while yet he is ever injuring him egregiously, traducing his name, and venting mischief against him? No; a man will look upon such an one as a notorious dissembler, and worse than a professed enemy. So says the Lord, "Shew your faith by your works. If ye love me, keep my commandments. Love not in word only but in deed."

3. Because where Christ's friendship to a person takes effect, it certainly has this effect, Eph. v. 25, 26. How does it appear that Christ died for such a person, that he has justified him, &c.? If that man be not holy in his life, it cannot appear; if he be, it appears by his sanctification, Tit. ii. 14. For that was the end of the friendship, to bring back the sinner to obedience.

4. Because though the free grace of God tends to holiness, Tit. ii. 11, 12. yet there is a disposition in the children of men to turn it to licentiousness, Jude, 4. Therefore the apostle cautions the Galatians, chap. v. 13. "Brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another." Wherefore our Lord puts the trial of faith on good works, and of his friendship on universal obedience to his commands; that men may not by their unholy lives joined to a holy profession, make Christ the minister of sin, and deceive and destroy their own souls.

I shall now make some application of this doctrine.

USE 1. Of information. This shews us,

1. What the life of a Christian is. It is a life of doing whatsoever Christ commands. And so it is,

(1.) A doing life, an active not an idle life. Hence is that exhortation, Phil. ii. 12. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;" and that, Rev. xiv. 13. where we are told the saints at death "rest from their labours, and their works do follow them." And they have so much to do, the commandment being exceeding broad, Psal. cxix. 96. that they have no time to be idle. Christ went about doing good, and Christians must imitate him therein. God has set every one their work and post, and they must be busy in the work of their general and particular vocation.

(2.) A well doing life. Many are busy enough doing mischief: but the Christian's life is a life of doing good, for God's honour, and their own and their neighbour's good. Many do what is good on the matter, but they do it not well. The Christian's life is a life of doing good, from a good principle, to a good end, for a good reason, and in a good manner, 1 Tim. i. 5.

(1.) A watchful life, 1 Cor. xvi. 13. *Watch ye*, says the apostle. One will never do whatsoever Christ commands without watchfulness. A loose careless life will never make it. If one do not watch, they

will let the season of some duties slip; they will go contrary to his commands.

(4.) A resolute life. Eph. vi. 15. It is not possible but that, in such an evil world, the Christian must have some times the trial of advices and commands laid on him, contrary to the commands of Christ. But he must be precise in his adherence to the commands of Christ, say the contrary or be displeased who will. So there is need of resoluteness in this case, and need of a brow for a bargain. "For the fearful, and unbelieving, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone," Rev. xxi. 8.

2. That there are few friends of Christ in the world, his flock is *a little flock*, Luke xii. 32. It is little wonder that there are so many opposers of the interests of Christ, so many neutralists in his cause, and so many enemies to his people and way: for certainly his friends are very few in number: there are so few disposed to do whatsoever he commands them. If we examine the number of them by this character, it is but here one and there one will be found. The most part declare themselves none of his friends, but his haters, John xv. 18.

3. Sincere Christians may take comfort from this, whose conscience witnesseth their conscientious regard to all the commands of Christ, and their sincere endeavour to come up to the obedience of them all. They are, and are accounted of Christ his friends. Though in many things they offend, yet in every known duty they aim at obedience; and our Lord makes a difference betwixt weakness and wickedness. Hence David says, "I have kept the ways of the Lord, and have not wickedly departed from my God," Psal. xviii. 21. Though they want not their sin that easily besets them, yet their consciences witness that they are set against it as well as other sins: and the Lord will distinguish between voluntary yielding and involuntary, the reign and tyranny of sin, ver. 23. "I was also upright before him, (says the same holy man) and I kept myself from mine iniquity."

Let all such as make not conscience of universal obedience know, that their pretences to Christ's friendship are in vain. For, says he, "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" Luke vi. 46. If your life be not in some measure suited to that character, ye do but deceive yourselves thinking ye have that privilege. If ye do not what Christ commands, but what the devil, the world, and your own passions command you, theirs you are to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, not Christ's. Ye are self-pleasers, men-pleasers if the will of Christ is not the reason of your obedience, and does not influence you to universal obedience.

5. *Lastly*, The doctrine of free grace gives no encouragement to looseness of life: for there is no separating of faith and holiness. If ye be Christ's friends by faith, ye will be his faithful and tender servants in obedience. Though ye are not to gain heaven by works, yet having the right to it made over to you as his friends, you will work good works as the native fruit of the friendship.

USE II. Of exhortation. Shew yourselves Christ's friends by doing whatsoever he commands you. And do ye what Christ commands you, if you would show yourselves his friends,

1. In a time of general apostasy and backsliding from the ways of God, such as our time is, when the torrent of backsliding is running with a mighty force. It was the commendation of Noah, that he "was a just man and perfect in his generations, and walked with God," Gen. vi. 9. So did Lot in Sodom. It is a small thing to do what Christ commands, when credit, and reputation, and multitudes are on the side of religion: but to be best when others are worst, to be among the few names is the trial of a friend of Christ, Rev. iii. 4. John vi. 67. to regard his commands when the generation is trampling on them, that is friendship indeed, Psal. xii. 7.

2. Even when it must be to your temporal loss, Heb. xi. 35. While Christ and the world go together, hypocrites will follow him; while they may do the commands of Christ on free cost, they will do them: but if once their worldly interest interfere, there they will stop. They have a sort of love to Christ, but their love to their worldly interest is stronger, and so the latter swallows up the former. Hence persecution drives many away from Christ; and when there is no persecution, covetousness will supply its place. But shew your sincerity by following the commands of Christ over the belly of all losses that ye can meet with in the world, Luke xiv. 26.

3. When his hand is lying heavy on you by crosses and afflictions. The devil says that Job is an hypocrite, Job i. 9, 10.; but Job was regardful of God's commands even in affliction. It is easy swimming while the head is borne up; and to be for God while he appears to be for us in favourable dispensations, is not so hard. But to be tender of the authority of an afflicting God, to strive to please him in all things, doing and suffering, while he is afflicting, crossing, and chastising us, there is the trial of a friend of Christ, Job xxvii. 10. "Will he delight himself in the Almighty? will he always call upon God?"

4. When sin comes with a seen advantage in its hand, as in the case of Moses, Heb. xi. 24—26. When the poison is presented in a golden cup, and there is a seen advantage in sinning, it will readily

make Christ's pretended friends lay by their mask, and trample on Christ's command, that they may reach the bait. So Judas betrays Christ when he could have thirty pieces of silver for it; and Demas embraced the present world, letting the world to come slip. But know ye that at such a time Christ is taking a trial of your friendship; and therefore see to yourselves.

5. When the sin that most easily besets you comes in competition with your obedience to the commands of Christ, Psal. xviii. 23. When it and the command are in the balance, and the command weighs it down, it is a hopeful sign. Many who will bear very fair in many instances, are quite undermined when this comes to be their case. They could raise their regard to the command of Christ above many temptations, but there is one thing that ever spurns his authority, Mark x. 21.

6. When there is nothing to keep you back from sin, but pure regard to the command of Christ. Sometimes holy providence brings people into such circumstances for their trial. The temptation is attended with all advantages which the evil heart could wish, fair occasion, secrecy, and encouragement to it from every hand, but the hand of a holy God. So it was in Joseph's case, but he shewed himself a friend of Christ, saying, "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" Gen. xxxix. 9. Many temptations are resisted from some extrinsic considerations: but this is the trial of a friend of Christ.

7. When you are tempted to sin that has such a plausible name in the world, that ye can lose no credit by it, but rather be in hazard of risking your reputation by your making any bones of it. There are many such sins which the generation has stamped lawfulness upon, and is ready to expose as needless scrupulosity the abstaining therefrom. But conform not ye to the world, Rom. xii. 2. Tenderness has often been nicknamed preciseness, and God's people been wondered at, "thinking it strange that they run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of them," 1 Pet. iv. 4. But if all the world should approve the practice and Christ disapprove it, Christ's friends must stand off from it, "walking circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise," Eph. v. 15.

8. When the tempter appears resolute in the temptation, and being repulsed renews the attack. Shew your regard to Christ's command by a resolute and continued resistance. So Paul did, 2 Cor. xii. 8. "For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me." They may have some respect to Christ's command at first, who being importuned will yield the cause at length, like Pilate, who condemned Christ over the belly of his conscience.

9. *Lastly*, When Christ is calling to some more than ordinary hard task. Sometimes the Lord takes a trial of men this way, calling them to some unordinary piece of obedience. So he did with Abraham, as to the command to sacrifice his beloved son Isaac. And so he did with the rich young man, as to the order to sell all that he had, and give to the poor, Mark x. 21, 22.

I shall offer you the following motives to shew yourselves Christ's friends by doing whatsoever he commands you, without reserve or exception.

1. Because all his commands are the commands of an absolute Lord, to whom we owe obedience in all things, Exod. xx. 2. *I am the Lord thy God.* We were created by him, are preserved by him; whatever being we have, or means of life and being, all are from him, Acts xvii. 28. Therefore he has an unlimited power over us, and we ought to live, move, and be for him, in all things. And any command of his neglected is a withdrawing of due obedience from him.

2. All his commands are just, righteous, and reasonable, Psal. cxix. 128. Men sometimes demand unjust and unreasonable things of their subjects; but all his ways are judgment, and his commands just, Rom. vii. 12. He has linked together our duty and true interest: so that he requires nothing of us, but what is for our good: and we cannot trample on any of his commands, but we act against our real interest: and so sinning against God, we sin also against our own souls, Prov. viii. 36. The interests of men's souls, and of their lusts, are different indeed. God's commands do cross the latter, but never the former.

3. We are all of us under covenant-engagements to do whatsoever he commands us. We have all avouched him for our Lord, Luke vi. 46. Many of us have of late taken on these engagements at his table; let us not forget them. Several who have fallen off from renewing their engagements in that manner, in some former years have taken them solemnly on: let such remember that their disusing of that ordinance does not loose their engagements taken on formerly, but they lie on them before the Lord. And those who never yet sat down at the Lord's table, are yet baptized? and so are firmly engaged to him as their Lord and Master, to do whatsoever he commands them, Gal. iii. 27. So that if we do not, we must expect to be treated as rebels, apostates, covenant breakers, as men that cast off the yoke of Christ, after they have professed to take it on.

4. Christ has been the best friend ever mankind had: he has done for sinners what no creature whatsoever ever did or could have done

for them, John xv. 13. Rom. v. 8. Look ye for any share in the benefit of his death; and will ye refuse to obey him? Remember that word, Heb. v. 9. "Being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." If ever he was a Priest for you, he will surely be your King: if ye be saved by his blood, ye will surely be sanctified by his Spirit.

5. He refused nothing that was laid upon him for the behoof of poor sinners; but whatever was the will of his Father for that effect, he did readily comply with it, Psal. xl. 7, 8. "Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me: I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart." The hardest of commands were laid on him, and the hardest sufferings put upon him: but the cup given him to drink he would by no means refuse. What are we then that we should make any exceptions in our obedience to him?

6. If ye do not whatsoever he commands you, but still make some exceptions of some things ye cannot comply with, ye will lose that which ye do: the neglected known duty will spoil all the duties ye perform; the indulged known sin will mar all the other pieces of your reformation. It will be like poison to a cup of liquor. (1.) It will mar it as to acceptance with God, Jam. ii. 10. "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." No partial obedience will ever be acceptable to God. He must have the whole man, the whole heart engaged in his service, or he will accept none at your hand. Hence says the psalmist, Psal. lxvi. 18. "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." (2.) It mars it as to the eternal reward, 2 John, 8. Partial services may indeed receive a temporal reward, like Jehu's half reformation: but then there is no more got thereby.

7. It is necessary to evidence your sincerity, Psal. cxix. 6. "Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments," says David. Universal obedience in a gospel-sense is the badge of Christ's real friends. Therefore labour to know your whole duty, and readily comply with every duty you know. While ye thus supply what is lacking in your conversation, filling up all the gaps ye can discern therein, ye will discover yourselves the true friends of Christ, and you will have much comfort and peace in it, 2 Cor. i. 12. while ye leave nothing unattempted, wherewith your heart may reproach you. This will be a mean of confidence before the Lord to you, 1 John iii. 21, "If our heart condemn us not, (says the apostle) then have we confidence towards God." But if ye still retain some sweet morsel under the tongue, some secret exception against some part of Christ's yoke, ye will declare yourselves none

of Christ's friends, but his real haters and enemies. And it will prove these six sad things against you.

(1.) That ye are yet in the black state of nature, unregenerate: for, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new," 2 Cor. v. 17. For the new creature from the time of its birth is perfect in parts, though not in degrees. It is furnished with all its integral parts, though none of them are come to their full growth. There is indeed something lacking in every part of the new man, but no part altogether lacking. And if ye be not born again, ye have no right to the inheritance, John iii. 3. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

(2.) That whatever your attainments are, ye are but hypocrites, Psal. xviii. 23. "For sincere Christians are universal in their obedience, Psal. cxix. 6. She was the false mother who would have had the child divided; and she is an adulteress that takes one instead of her husband. And they are false to Christ who indulge themselves in one known sin, whatever lengths they may otherwise go. And hypocrites are in a sad case, as you may see, Rev. iii. 15, 16. Matth. xxiv. 51.

(3.) That ye have not the Spirit of Christ; for wherever he dwells, he brings forth the fruits of holiness, and these are *in all goodness*, Eph. v. 9. Where then there is only some and not all goodness, there the Spirit is not: and that cuts off all your pretensions to Christ, Rom. viii. 9. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

(4.) That ye are not truly mortified to any thing, but under the reigning power of sin: for your right-eye sins remain untouched. Whereas, "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts," Gal. v. 24. True mortification is universal; while one member is alive, the body is not dead: death removes life from every part of the body, and so does mortification with the body of sin and death. One lust on the throne is sufficient to keep Christ out of it. And this binds over the whole man to hell-fire, Matth. v. 29.

(5.) That you do not one thing right, Isa. i. 11—15. For it is hereby evident that you do nothing out of love to God, or respect to his authority: because if it were so, ye would regard his authority in that thing as well as in other things, and true love to God would not allow the placing any thing in his room.

(6.) *Lastly*, That ye are despisers of the whole law, and of the whole yoke of Christ, James ii. 10, 11. "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For

he that said, Do not commit adultery; said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law." As the breaking of one link is the breaking of the chain; so he that despises the authority of God in one command, despises it in all. What can be expected then, but that ye are and will be treated as enemies of God? Luke xix. 27.

8. *Lastly*, Consider the glorious privilege of those who do whatsoever Christ commands them. They are his friends and favourites. He was their friend from eternity: he is their friend in time, and he will be their friend for ever, when time is gone.

Now, if ye would walk up to this character,

1. Read the scripture much, and read it as the rule of your duty, as the book of your instructions: For, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works," 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17. Some read the Bible as it were for mere reading's sake: some that they may be masters of and able to talk of scripture-history: but few read to the end they may know what is the will of Christ as to their walk, that they may frame their life according to it.

2. Let your heart lie open to the discoveries of the will of Christ either in the written or preached word. Beware of staving off convictions of sin and duty, of slighting discoveries of the mind of God in matters of your practice: but where the Lord makes light to shine, open your hearts to receive it, and be not of those that rebel against the light.

3. Keep the word before your eye, in the whole of your conversation, knowing that whatever ye are doing, the word binds you to do it after such a manner; and labour ye to conform to it, Psal. cxix. 9. As one walking in the dark, fixes his eye on the candle carried before him, thereby to direct every step: so do ye "take heed unto the sure word of prophecy, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place," 2 Pet. i. 19. Let not the world's good or ill opinion of a thing be what shall determine you, but what the Lord's word says of it, and let that determine you over the belly of all objections, Mark x. 15.

4. Be watchful to observe the seasons of duty, Psal. i. 3. To every thing there is a time, and every thing is beautiful in its season: and if one miss the season, he misses the duty itself in many cases. Sometimes God puts opportunity of doing such a thing in one's hand: if they let it slip, they may never have access to it again, Gal. vi. 10.

5. Whatever ye are called to, set about it in faith, *doing all in the*

name of the Lord Jesus, Col. iii. 17. Seeing your call from the word, apply yourself to it, in the faith of the promise of assistance, 2 Tim. ii. 1. Though it may seem an easy thing, venture not upon it but in faith of strength for it from the Lord: for oftimes when men are surest in their own conceit, they are really loosest. Though never so hard, your call being clear, go forward to it, and on in it in faith; and ye shall be carried through: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me," says the apostle, Phil. iv. 13. And again says he, *When I am weak, then am I strong*, 2 Cor. xii. 10.

6. Be frequent in the thoughts of love to Christ, the shortness and uncertainty of your time, and in breathings after perfection. The believing thoughts of Christ's love will oil the wheels of the soul for the course of obedience. The consideration of the shortness and uncertainty of your time will be a spur to diligence, and falling in with occasions of serving the Lord, and will shew that if your work be hard, it will not be of long continuance. And the breathing after perfection will natively lead you to be making progress.

7. Labour to get on resolution for God, and ward off the fear of man, Eph. vi. 15. Prov. xxix. 25.

8. Learn to live above the world, to keep it under your feet, and not to set your heart on it, 1 Tim. vi. 10.

9. *Lastly*, Observe the side where you are weakest, and there set double guards: and be peremptory for victory over the sin that most easily besets you; and to do what Christ commands in that part, Matth. v. 29.

Doct. III. They are the friends of Christ, who are in a gospel-sense universal in their obedience to his commands.

This is the happy state, this is the honourable relation which they stand in, who are thus tender in their practice. I have already opened this practice; it remains only to open up the privilege of such, which I offer in the following particulars.

1. Friendship properly so called is mutual: it stands not upon one side only, but is competent to each of the parties who are in the bond of friendship. And Christ's sincere servants are in the bond and state of friendship with Christ, John xv. 15. *I have called you friends*, says he.

(1.) Christ is their friend, Cant. v. *ult.* He is not only their Lord and Master, but he is their friend. He professes himself their friend whoever be their haters and enemies; he does the part of a friend to them, and they have pitched on him as their friend, and may claim his friendship as their privilege, and improve it to all intents and purposes. This honour have all the saints.

(2.) They are Christ's friends, James ii. 23. *Abraham was called the friend of God.* Most part of the world are enemies to Christ, and haters of him, for they will not be ruled by him, Luke xix. 27. The greatest length they are brought to is to feign submission to him, retaining their hatred, Psal. lxxxi. 15. Only his sincere servants are his hearty friends, as saith the text. They are that part of mankind, who really are, and are owned by him to be his real friends.

2. In friendship there is a pecular affection, regard, love, and esteem, Deut. xiii. 6.—*thy friend, which is as thine own soul.* And such there is between Christ and his sincere servants, 1 Cor. vi. 17. *He that is joined to the Lord, is one spirit.* They are truly one, in the strictest bonds of one spirit.

(1.) Christ has a peculiar affection and regard for them. They are his darlings, his *only ones* in the world, Cant. vi. 9. Though the world count them unworthy of a room among them, he bears them in his heart, Exod. xxviii. 29. Though the world hates them, he has a singular love to them, Joh xv. 9. He is very mindful of them, even when they think he has forgotten them, Isa. xlix. 15, 16. He looks on them as his peculiar treasure, Psal. cxxxv. 4. 1 Pet. ii. 9; his jewels, Mal. iii. 17; and therefore he has a special concern for them in a time of common calamity, Ezek. ix. 4; till Lot be in Zoar, Sodom could not be destroyed, Gen. xix. 22. Hence is that tender address, Isa. xxvi. 20. "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast."

(2.) They have a peculiar affection and regard for him, Psal. lxxiii. 25. "Whom have I in heaven but thee? (says the psalmist) and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee." All persons and things in the world are but loss and dung to them in comparison of Christ, Phil. iii. 8. They have seen a glory in him darkening all created excellency; so that he is dearer to them than all the comforts of life, yea than life itself, Luke xiv. 26.

3. In friendship there is a common interest of the parties; for a friend is as it were another self. So is there betwixt Christ and his sincere servants, 1 John i. 3. "Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ."

(1.) Jesus Christ espouses their interest, and concerns himself in all their concerns, Acts ix. 4. He takes part with them against all their enemies, and seconds them in all rencounters, whether with Satan, Luke xxii. 31, 32, with men, 2 Tim. iv. 17. or their own lusts, 2 Cor. xii. 9. so that there is always more with them than against them. He sympathises with them in all their griefs and afflictions, Zech. ii. 8. Isa. lxiii. 9.

(2.) They espouse Christ's interests, and concern themselves in the matters of his glory: "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up," says David, Psal. lxix. 9. What wounds his honour, wounds their hearts: "Rivers of waters run down mine eyes: because they keep not thy law, Psal. cxix. 136. They have a natural concern for the prosperity of his kingdom, and labour to take part with it against whosoever oppose it. So that even when their own private case lies heavy on them, the public interest of Christ does so too, as in David's case, Psal. li. 18.

4. In friendship there is a peculiar freedom and familiarity which the parties use one with another, which they use not towards others. And such there is betwixt Christ and his sincere servants. There was one in David's court, 2 Sam. xv. 7. another in Solomon's, 1 Kings iv. 5. who was the king's friend, as admitted to greater freedom with the king than the rest of the courtiers. Such are all Christ's sincere servants.

(1.) Christ treats them with great familiarity, the familiarity of a friend, John xv. 15. He visits them in their lowest condition, and speaks a word in season to them, when their nearest friends on earth can do them no service, Psal. cxxxviii. 3. Lam. iii. 57. He brings them sometimes very near him, Cant. i. 4. and communicates his secrets to them, that are hid from the rest of the world, Psal. xxiv. 14.; shews them his glory, Is. xxxiii. 17; opens the mystery of providence to them, and helps them to see love in the darkest dispensations, Psal. cvii. *ult.*; and sometimes gives them a sight of everlasting love, Jer. xxxi. 3.

(2.) They use great familiarity with him, Cant. vii. 11. Whatever they need, and at whatsoever time, they go to him for it freely, Luke xi. 5, 6. Their most loathsome sores they can lay out before him, and freely tell him all their mind, even what they cannot communicate to any on earth, Eph. iii. 12. And if at any time it is otherwise, the fault lies in not improving the privilege of their friendship.

5. *Lastly*, In friendship there is mutual real friendliness in deeds of friendship, according to the circumstances of the parties, Prov. xviii. 24. "A man that hath friends, must shew himself friendly." Friendship animates one friend to do for another, as they are capable. And,

1*st*, Christ is very friendly to them. The acts of his friendship towards his sincere servants who can sufficiently declare? Many a time has he found them in the straits, wherein none but he could relieve them, and he has befriended them therein, and he will befriend them.

(1.) He befriended them in the everlasting covenant, undertaking for them in it. When they lay with the rest of mankind in a lost helpless state, there being none in the whole creation able to act for them, he befriended them, took on their person, bonnd himself for them, to pay their debt of duty and punishment. So he became Surety for his ruined friends, Psal. xl. 7.

(2.) He befriended them in his life and death in the world. He was born holy for them, lived holy for them, and died for them on the cross, John xv. 13. Never was there such an act of friendship as this among men, one bearing the wrath of God in the room and stead of another. O how he loved them!

(3.) He befriended them in their conversion to God, Jer. xxxi. 3. When they lay dead in sin, he quickened them; when they were going away from God, he brought them back again; while they remained in the world lying in wickedness, he separated them for himself. While the guilt of all their sins lay on them, he clothed them with his righteousness, and procured their justification by his blood; while their sins had dominion over them, he broke the yoke by his Spirit, &c.

(4.) He befriends them all their life long. On earth in all their necessities, whoever proves their enemy, he takes them by the hand, Psal. cxviii. 6. And he befriends them in heaven, pleading and managing their cause there, 1 John ii. 1. They have a friend in court there.

(5.) He befriends them at death when no other can do it, Psal. xxiii. 4. He takes the sting out of it before it comes to them: he has another habitation provided for them, a better mansion, before they remove out of the body: and he sends his angels to carry their separate souls into Abraham's bosom. O nonsuch friendship!

(6.) *Lastly*, He will befriend them at the judgment. He will raise up the bodies of his friends out of the dust by his Spirit: he will set them on his right hand, and adjudge them to the everlasting kingdom, as the blessed of his Father.

2*dly* Christ's sincere servants are friendly to him. But how? Their goodness extends not to him; they have nothing to give him but of his own. But he reckons them friendly to him in being friendly to his members, Matth. xxv. and in a sincere obedience to all his commandments, as saith the text.

I shall conclude all with a very brief application.

USE I. Of lamentation over the case of those who cannot be brought to a sincere endeavour to comply with whatsoever Christ commands them. How many are there who comply with very little that he commands them, but in the whole track of their conversation

shew a profane contempt of the commands of Christ? There are many who do many things, but spoil all, by the woful exceptions they put in to some particular commands, which they can never be honestly engaged in the observance of. Some are swayed by their carnal interest, and they cannot do such a command of Christ's, for it crosses their worldly interest; others cannot do another command, for it lies cross to their honour and credit: and others cannot do another command, for it is contrary to their humour, &c.

Ah! how do such stand in their own light, and deprive themselves of Christ's friendship by the way that they take! Their loss is inexpressible. Christ's friendship is what one cannot want, but he is ruined for time and eternity: and wherefore is it lost, but for a thing of nought?

USE II. Of comfort and encouragement to the sincere servants of Christ, honestly addressing themselves to the obedience of all his commands without exception.

1. This may animate you to go on in universal obedience, to stick at nothing that Christ commands, but cordially to fall in with every known duty. Our Lord takes it as a sign and proof of friendship to him, and allows you to take it as an evidence of his friendship to you, Psal. cxix. 6.

2. It may assure you of tenderness and compassion in that wherein ye come short. Christ's friendship makes your pardon sure, 1 John ii. 1; it provides a mantle of love to cast over the infirmities of his people, Numb. xxiii. 21. and takes the sincere will for the deed, 2 Cor. viii. 12.

3. This may determine you to pursue your duty, whatever displeasure, ill-will, and hatred of men ye may incur for it, Heb. xi. 27. If men say in effect, If you do such a thing which Christ commands, we will reckon you enemies; what may balance that is, what Christ says, "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you."

4. *Lastly*, It may help you to bear afflictions, that Christ is your friend. Nothing comes to you but through his hand, John v. 22. So whatever your case is, you are in a friend's hand, who sticketh closer than a brother.

THE

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERS

OF

TRUE BELIEVERS.

IX. IN RELATION TO THEIR WORK IN THIS LIFE, AND THEIR JOURNEY TO THE OTHER WORLD.*

THE NATURE AND NECESSITY OF THE CHRISTIAN'S WORK.

ECCLESIASTES ix. 10.

Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest.

As no man had more access to know what might be made of this present life, than Solomon; so none gives us more mortifying accounts of it than he. He shews it to be short, uncertain, and mixed with a variety of ungrateful events. And thereupon he calls us to make the best use of it we may, and that it will bear. (1.) He will have us to take the comforts of this life, in the favour of God, ver. 7—9. "Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for God now accepteth thy works. Let thy garments be always white; and let thy head lack no ointment. Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest, all the days of the life of thy vanity, which he hath given thee under the sun, all the days of thy vanity: for that is thy portion in this life, and in thy labour which thou takest under the sun." (2.) To ply the business of life while life lasts. So there are comforts to be had in life, and there is business to be done in it. Happy are they who taking the

* The author's manuscript bears, that the sermons on this subject were begun to be preached, July 26, and ended Sept. 27, 1724. having during that time also preached from other texts.

one, do the other. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might," &c.

In these words we have two things.

1. An exhortation to ply the business of life, while life lasts. No man was born to be idle, nor sent into the world to sleep or dream away a lifetime, but to be doing, and doing good. And here is,

(1.) The business of life, "Whatsoever thy hand shall find to do with thy might," Heb. The work we have to do is a work of many pieces, as much as to fill up every minute of our short time; and no part of it is to be neglected, *Whatsoever thy hand shall find to do.* It is determined two ways what we have to do. (1.) What God gives us opportunity for, what our hand shall at any time find to be laid to hand by our Creator. He is our great Master, and appoints every one his particular work, by his word and providence: he lays it to our hand by giving us opportunities. And so it is restrained to that which is good. (2.) What God gives us ability for. He gives might, strength of body and mind, comforts and conveniencies of life, as talents that we are to trade with. And we are not to abuse these, but use them for the ends he gives them for.

(2.) The activity to be used in this business of life. *Do, do it.* Neglect not this your work, put it not off with delays, but do you timely and seasonably, while the time and season lasts. It is but a short time, and therefore we must husband it well.

2. A motive to press the exhortation. Do, for your doing time will be done shortly: and then if your work be not done, ye will be for ever undone. And,

(1.) Our life in the world is but a journeying to the grave, the state of the dead. Before we begin to walk alone, we begin to go to it, even from the womb: and in that journey there is no stopping; sleep we or wake we, we are always going the other step towards it. And when a man is in his prime, going and living at all ease, he is still going thither. (2.) There is no doing there; if your work be not done ere you come there, it will never be done. This is the world for working, and that is the world for the reward of our work.

The scope of the text may be gathered up in the two following doctrinal observations.

Doct. I. It nearly concerns all men diligently to improve their opportunities and abilities in doing their work accordingly, while life, opportunities, and abilities last with them.

Doct. II. Our life in this world is a journey, a going to the grave,

to the state of the dead, where there is no doing of our work any more.

Each doctrine shall be handled in order.

Doct. I. It nearly concerns all men diligently to improve their opportunities and abilities in doing their work accordingly, while life, opportunities, and abilities last with them.

In discoursing from this doctrine, I shall shew,

I. What is the work to be done, while life, opportunities, and abilities last with us.

II. What are those opportunities and abilities which are to be diligently improved in doing our work.

III. Improve the subject.

I. Our first business is to shew what is the work to be done, while life, opportunities and abilities last with us. In the general, there is a threefold work laid to our hand.

1. Work for ourselves, for our own good and welfare, Psal. xlix. 18. *Men will praise thee, when thou dost well to thyself.* I put this in the first place, not that it is our chief work, more than ourselves are to be our chief end: but that fallen man will never work for God aright, till once he begin to work for himself, laying his own salvation to heart. We have all work to do for ourselves; work for this life, and for eternity. It is duty to see to the former, according to our opportunities and abilities; but not as most men do, to make it our all, the whole business of our life; for it is but the least part of what we have to do, Luke xi. 41, 42. We may say in this case, as Matth. xxiii. 23. "Wo unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites: for ye pay tithe of mint, and anise, and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith; these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone."

2. Work for God, for his honour and glory in the world; 1 Cor. vi. 20. *Glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.* God is our Maker, and he made us for himself; therefore we should live, move, and be for him, Matth. v. 16. If we are Christians, redeemed by the blood of his Son, this is a new tie to this work, Phil. i. 21. *To me to live is Christ.* This is little minded by most men, who never consider for what use they are in God's world, or in Christ's church: what they are doing for God, wherein they are serviceable to him in promoting his glory in the world. Yet as God is our chief end, this is our chief work, and it will be enquired into at the day of accounts; and what we did with our opportunities and abilities for glorifying of him.

3. Work for our neighbours, for their good and welfare: according to the apostle's direction, Phil. ii. 4. *Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.* God has made men in society, and knit them together by the bond of a common human nature: and Christ has knit his people together by the additional tie, *one faith, one Spirit, &c.*; and has so bound every man to see the good of mankind, and every Christian the good especially of fellow-Christians, Gal. vi. 10. He gives men opportunities and abilities to benefit their fellow-creatures, and it ought to be a question to every one of us, what use we are for in the world, towards the good of mankind? what benefit God's creatures, our fellows, have by us? what advantage Christ's members receive at our hand? This will be taken special notice of in the awful day of accounts, as appears from Matth. xxv.

God commands men to see to the temporal welfare of others. 1 Cor. x. 24. *Let no man seek his own; but every man another's wealth,* And as the poor are to look for the welfare of the rich, so the rich are under the same obligation to seek the good of the poor, as their fellow-creatures, and fellow-Christians. And therefore either masters or tenants depopulating grounds, and laying field to field, to the prejudice of the poorer sort, their mean of living is no doubt a crying oppression in the ears of the Lord of hosts, and will bring a curse on the selfish and unmerciful men who do it, Is. v. 8—10. *May not I do with mine own what I will?* is a saying competent to JEHOVAH, who is absolute Lord of the creatures, as having made them of nothing; but to no man under heaven, no not the highest monarch, who in all his dealings is under the law of loving his neighbour as himself, and has but a limited power over what is his own.

He commands men also to seek the spiritual good of their neighbours, Rom. xv. 2. *Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification.* And that so much the more as their souls is preferable to their bodies. Hence it is, that as soon as the grace of God reaches one's own heart, he is in a mighty concern to get other brands plucked out of the fire, and to share of that grace he partakes of, as did the woman of Samaria, John iv. It is Cain-like to be unconcerned for the spiritual good of others: sure it is devilish to go about to ensnare and entrap others into sin, and wrestle against their soul's good.

And thus we may take up our work we have to do with our opportunities and abitities while they last, in these two particulars.

First, Salvation-work, Phil. ii. 12. *Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.* We came into the world lost sinners; there

is a possibility of our salvation; and we may get it, if we will improve our opportunities and abilities for that end. These opportunities are confined to the narrow compass of the time of this life; and in that time God lays that work to our hands. And it concerns us all timely to ply it, for we must do it now or never. There is no working of that work in the grave, when the candle of life is blown out at death; as the tree falls, it must lie for ever. There are many pieces of salvation-work that we must do, while doing-time lasts with us. The chief whereof are these,

1. We must consider our ways, and come to ourselves by a sound conviction of sin, the sin of our nature, hearts, and lives. This is a work not to be delayed, lest opportunity and ability slip, Hag. i. 7. *Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Consider your ways.* Ability may be taken from us in this life, and we rendered incapable of a solid thought. In the other world the opportunity is gone. There indeed men will consider their ways, but it will be out of time. Now is the time for that work of consideration while in life and health. Ply it then, and see your ruined natural state, till it cause you to cry, *What shall I do to be saved?* Some go rambling through the world in a profane life, and in a moment slip down to the grave, never considering till it be out of time. Some go sleeping and dreaming through the world in ignorance or formality, and never lift their eyes till in hell. But all that shall be heirs of salvation, take thought of their soul's state in time.

2. We must come to Christ and unite with him by faith; for without that there is no salvation. Heb. xi. 6. Here is work, most necessary work for us, to embrace Christ for all his salvation, as held out to us in the gospel; to flee for refuge to the Redeemer's blood, and take shelter under that covert; to get from under the covenant of works and its curse, to be personally instated in the covenant of grace, and savingly interested in the blessings of it, John vi. 29. *This is the work of God that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.* There is now an opportunity for it; Christ is offering himself and his covenant: delay it, and the opportunity may slip you for ever, Matth. xx. 10. In the other world there is no beginning to believe unto salvation.

3. We must get out our pardon of all our sins under the broad seal of heaven. A necessary work; for without it ye will perish in your sins, Matth. v. 25. A man whose life being by the law adjudged to be taken from him, depended entirely on the king's pardon, would lose no time of suing for his pardon, lest it should come too late. Now is the time wherein heaven's pardon is to be had, and in a little that time will be gone. In death there is no pardon

to be had, no removing of the curse. Yet how do men trifle in this matter, as if the pardon were to wait till they were ready to receive it?

4. We must be born again, become new creatures, get new hearts and a new nature, and be renewed in all the faculties of our souls after the image of God. Here is work to do, Ezek. xviii. 31. "Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed, and make you a new heart, and a new spirit; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" This is absolutely necessary work, John iii. 3. For *except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.* And now is the season of the new birth: but when death comes it is gone. There is a mighty change in the grave indeed whither we are going, but there is no saving change there. The bodies that lie down there full of the sins of their youth, will rise with them again: and the sinful souls that parted with them at death, will meet them again in no better plight at the resurrection. Ye must be born again now or never.

5. We must repent of our sins. This is a work absolutely necessary, Luke xiii. 3. *Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.* Heaven's gates are bolted against impenitent sinners. We must turn from our sins unto God, with hatred of, and hearty sorrow for them, otherwise we will die, we will perish in them, Ezek. xviii. 31, above cited. And now is the season for repentance; there is no repenting in the grave. In the other world impenitent sinners will doubtless change their minds, they will regret from the heart their graceless careless way; and they will wish a thousand times that they had seen to themselves in time: but their repentance there will be their torment; it will be out of time, not kindly, and will not be accepted.

6. We must mortify our lusts. This is not easy work, but it is absolutely necessary, Rom viii. 13, "For, (says the apostle,) if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." We must either be the death of our lusts, or they will be the death of our souls. If one of them go, our life must go for its life; even that lust which is most dear to us, and which we can most hardly part with, must be mortified, Matth. v. 29. and that work must be done now or never. When death comes, there is no more possibility of mortification; there is a bar drawn for ever betwixt damned sinners and sanctifying influences. The state of the damned is inconsistent with the fulfilling of some lusts; but however they may be kept from them, to their torment, there can be no kindly mortification of lusts there; but, on the contrary, sin in the ruined soul will come to its perfection.

7. We must live to righteousness, in works of holy obedience. This is work to fill our hands every minute of our time, and necessary work, John xv. 14. "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." Luke vi. 46, "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" They who are now idle in life, will labour under the weight of wrath for ever, without hope of an end of their toil. Now Christ shapes out our work for us, and takes a proof of our obedience to him. If we neglect it now, there will be no time hereafter for it; for the other world is that wherein men receive the reward of their works, and working time is over there, John ix. 4.

8. We must persevere in grace and good works to the end. This is work absolutely necessary, for such only shall get the heavenly crown, Matth. xxiv. 13. "He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." Rev. ii. 10. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." There is a danger of never entering on the way of the Lord, and a danger of apostasy and breaking off from it, when once a pereon is entered, Heb. x. 38, 39. If death catch us either of these ways, there is no mending of the matter for ever. That is a step off the way that can never be recovered.

9. *Lastly*, We must die well. This is a necessary piece of our work, our last work, on which much depends. If it be marred, there is no coming back to mend it, Job xiv. 14, "If a man die, shall he live again?" To die well is to die in the Lord, Rev. xiv. 13; to die in faith, Heb. xi. 13; to die in union with Christ, in peace and favour with God, within the compass of the well-ordered covenant. It is not a business to lay by the thoughts of till the time of it come: but the business of our life should be to learn to die: and we should often be essaying it.

Secondly, Our generation-work, Acts xiii. 36, "This is the work we have to do for God and the generation in which we live, that we may be useful not for ourselves only, but for our God and fellow-creatures, Rom. xv. 7. It is remarked of Noah, that he was perfect in his generations. There are, by the wise dispensation of God, several generations of men in the world, one after another; one goes off the stage, and another succeeds. Each generation has its work assigned it by the sovereign Lord; and each person in the generation has his also. And now is our time of plying of ours. We could not be useful in the generation that went before us; for then we were not: nor can we personally in that which shall come after us; for then we shall be off the stage. Now is our time; let us ply it, and not neglect usefulness in our generation. This work may be reduced to these two general heads.

1. The duties of our station and particular calling and relations in the world, 1 Cor. vii. 24. Every relation has a train of duties belonging to it, and God lays these duties on us as members of society, for his glory and the good of others. That is the room which we have to fill up in the world, by a conscientious performance of the duties incumbent on us, as placed on such and such a station and relation. That is to say, if one is a minister, he is faithfully to ply his ministerial work; if a husband, a wife, a parent, &c. they are faithfully to ply the work proper to such relations. For there is no doing of these duties in the grave, nor making up the defects there. Then all relations are dissolved, and the difference of stations is no more. So that these things must be done now or never.

2. Duties of special opportunities and abilities, Gal. vi. 10. Sometimes the Lord puts in a man's hand a special opportunity of some service, good work: which opportunity if he lets it slip, he may possibly never have it again all his life, as Saul in the case of the Amalekites, and as in Esau's case, Heb. xii. 17. So it is men's wisdom and duty to strike the iron while it is hot, to do the good they have opportunity to do, lest if they miss the tide, they never have access to repair the defect. Sometimes God gives men abilities, that if they will, they can do such a good thing. If they fall not in with it seasonably, the time may come, when, if they never so fain would, it is beyond their power, Heb. xii. 17.

He that takes heed to these two particulars, does the work of his generation.

II. I proceed to shew what are those opportunities and abilities which are to be diligently improved in doing our work, the work of our salvation and generation. These are all the advantages for working, which the Sovereign Lord and Master puts in our hands, with a charge to improve them in doing good with them, Luke xix. 12, 13. All is from him, and he has put them in our hand for his own service: and if we misimprove them, either by doing ill with them, or doing no good with them, our accounts will be with grief and not with joy; for he that gave us them will call us to an account for them, Luke xvi. 2. He gives us these opportunities and abilities, not to lay by us for no use, and far less to put them to an ill use; but to do with them for his glory, and our own and others' good.

1. The time of life is given men to do their work with, and should be improved accordingly, John ix. 4. *I must work the works of him that sent me*, says Christ, *while it is day*. He might have cut us off from the womb, and then we would have had no time to do any thing: he might ere now have laid us in the dust, and then our opportunity of working had been over. But we are still in life, and

our great business is to make ready for eternity. It is a precious time, an uncertain time, the only time for working. What use are we making of it? why should we trifle it away, which when once gone can never be recalled? How sad will it be, if our glass is run, while our work is undone?

2. The day of the gospel; precious gospel-seasons are given us for that end. These make the day of salvation, which need to be well improved while they last, 2 Cor. vi. 2. *Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.* Every sabbath, sermon, communion, &c. is a fair opportunity for peace with God, seeing to and advancing the soul's interest, In these the market of free grace is opened, and heaven's peace and pardon are proclaimed to rebels. These precious seasons will not last as to us, Christ will call in his ambassadors, and how soon his last call to us may come, we know not, Luke xiv. 24.

3. Seasons of the Spirit's blowing are to be thus improved, Cant. iv. *ult.* Sometimes the power of God comes along with ordinances, and Christ has sensibly his hand at the hole of the lock of sinners' hearts; convictions fasten on them, by the word or providences, and there is an unusual moving in the sinner's soul. O the need of striking in with these, to work out our salvation! Then is a fair gale for Immanuel's land, in which should the sinner set off for the port of heaven, he might surely at length arrive there. But the opportunity may soon be over, John iii. 8, and not returning, then lies wind-bound, and cannot move. So that many miss of heaven for altogether by misimproving it.

4. Fair occasions of doing good, and of service to God, Gal. vi. 10. Sometimes the Lord gives men a fair opportunity of such a piece of service to him; and by his providence invites men to embrace it, and act for him; then they should bestir themselves in a special manner. These opportunities are many times long kept open, and yet not embraced, but delayed from time to time, till in end they go out of their hands; the sheet is taken up to heaven, and the door is shut, Matth. xxv. 10. And then there is no doing with them more.

Next, The abilities to be thus improved, while they last with us, are,

1. Soundness of mind. God has made man a reasonable creature, given him judgment and reflection, a reasoning faculty and a memory; which are improved by education and use. These may be of good use, while assisted with the revelation made in the word. And they are to be diligently improved for our main concern and interest. But alas! how often are they thrown away on men's lusts, and confined to worldly interests! Now no man has a tack of

these; they may be taken from him while life lasts; and yet without them there is no doing our work. The most solid man or woman God can smite with madness, or take the exercise of their reason from them; and then the party's state must stand, for any visible mean, where it was before that came on; they are not capable of altering it to the better.

2. Strength and health of body. All the duties of religion are best done when one is in health and strength; for then the body is not a clog to the soul. And several of the duties of religion can hardly be done without it. A man cannot rise out of a sick-bed, and go to a sermon or a communion table, go about the worship of God in his family, &c. Yet alas! what a deal of work is laid up for the sick-bed and death-bed, when men are most unfit for doing any thing? And in the mean time youth, health, and strength are spent in pursuit of the world and lusts. But labour to make better use of them, some good use of them to eternity; for ere long ye will not have them to make use of at all: and it will be little comfort to think, that when ye had them, ye squandered them away in vanity, but laid them not out in your salvation and generation work.

3. Worldly substance. That is given of God to be improved for his honour: and whatever your portion of it is, the Lord has so far made you his stewards, and but stewards of it, who must give an account to your Lord, how ye have used it. God calls us to honour him with it, Prov. ii 9; and assuredly the more any has of it, the more it is required of them to lay out themselves for the honour of God, as being thereby put in the greater capacity to do for the honour of God in the world, Luke xii. 48, *For unto whomsoever much is given of him shall be much required:* though ordinarily the quite contrary course is taken. And men had need to improve it, while they have it, for it is mighty uncertain, Eccl. xi. 2.

4. *Lastly,* Power, authority, honour, reputation and respect. These come from God, who makes the difference in condition that is among men; some more, some less honourable, some to rule, and some to be ruled, &c. Psal. lxxv. 6, 7. *For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another.* And all these he gives to be improved for himself, who is the fountain of power and honour. The more a man has of them, the more access he has to act for God: hence a word for a good cause from some will be more effectual than a struggle made for it by others. Heavy then must be their accounts who make no conscience of doing the great work by these. They are uncertain, and soon fly away too; while people

have them, they would need to improve them, lest God be provoked to take from them, that which they would not use for his honour, but their lusts: *for*, saith he, *them that honour me, I will honour; and they that despise me, shall be lightly esteemed*, 1 Sam. ii. 30.

I shall shut up this doctrine with an use of exhortation.

While life, opportunites, and abilites last with you, ply your great work, the work of your salvation and generation; and do not delay it, but timely do your work. For enforcing this exhortation, let me suggest the following motives.

Mot. 1. Your work is great, and attended with much difficulty; therefore *work out your salvation with fear and trembling*, Phil. ii. 12. If it were a trifling business that might be either done or not done as one thought fit; and when to be done, done easily; ye might perhaps cause it wait your time. But surely your time should wait your work, and be carefully applied to it, husbanding it well. For,

1*st*, It is necessary work, and must be done, or ye are for ever undone, Luke x. 42. *One thing is needful.* It is work for your own salvation, and God's glory: and these are of all the most needful. It is not absolutely necessary to your happiness, that ye be healthy, wealthy, in respect and honour in the world: but that ye be gracious, believing, patient, holy, &c. that ye live for God, and be useful for him. If ye sleep in your seed-time, ye will beg in harvest; if ye do not sow, ye will suffer for ever.

2*dly*, It is difficult work, and not easily done; hence says our Lord, Luke xiii. 24. *Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.* Many doing people will fall short, because they do not their work in the right manner, Eccl. x. 15. Yea, they that do best will find enough ado to get through it safely, 1 Pet. iv. 18, and not to mar it. Consider,

(1.) It is heart-doing, doing with the heart, Prov. xxiii. 26. Among men if the work be done with the hands, whether it be with the heart or not, it is all a case. But though the tongue speak well, and the feet carry the man in good ways; yet if the heart be not at the work, the work is not done to purpose, Ezek. xxxiii. 31.

(2.) It is undoing work, work wherein ye have to undo much of what is done, like the pulling down what has been wrong put up, the opening out of a raveled hasp. (1.) Your own life is a raveled business, much disorder has been there; ye have woven your life into a web of sin and contrariety to the divine will: ye have that to open out again, by faith, repentance, and mortification; else ye will be swept away like the spider in his own web, with the besom of destruction, Ezek. xviii. 31. (2.) The way of the generation ye live in is a raveled business, a conspiracy against God: ye must do your

endeavour to undo that, and to bring it to rights. Ye must guard against being catched in their net, Acts ii. 40. *Save yourselves from this untoward generation.* Yea, ye must set yourselves to break and undo it, for God's honour and the good of others: and so ye must strive against the stream, or be carried headlong by it. And try it when ye will, ye will find it hard work; and many times ye will find ye come little speed, Jer. vi. 29. Yet ye must not give it over, 2 Pet. ii. 8. but bear up a testimony for God, Prov. xxvii. 4; and that is your generation-work, Luke xxi. 13.

(3.) It is counter-doing, doing a work wherein ye will find many doing against you, Matth. xi. 12. Apply yourselves to it when ye will, ye will find that it is a labouring in the fire, where ye will have much ado to carry on the work, over the belly of opposition. (1.) Satan will do against you, 1 Pet. v. 8. (2.) The evil world will join issue with him. (3.) Your own corrupt heart will join issue with both.

(4.) It is doing above your strength, your natural strength, 2 Cor. i. 8. We have work to do which our short arms cannot reach, and our natural abilities are not sufficient for. How then can it be done? Why, we must learn to fly on borrowed wings, and we must act with strength borrowed from the Mediator, 2 Tim. ii. 1. So there is no time to trifle.

Mot. 2. Ye have loud calls to your work, and it is dangerous to sit them, Psal. xcv. 7, 8. Unless ye stop your ears, ye cannot miss to hear them. Ye have,

1. The call of the word. God has given you the Bible in your hands, and every page of it bids you be doing quickly. He sends his messengers with his message to the sluggards on their bed, and in the name of God it is sounded in your ears, 2 Cor. vi. 2, "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." Sit not the call, lest the opportunity slip.

2. The call of pinching need and necessity. The case of your bodily wants makes you to labour for the meet that perisheth; and doth not the need of your perishing souls call you aloud to see to them, that they be not lost? The case of the generation, wherein so much dishonour is done to God, calls you aloud to lay out yourself for God, Psal. cxix. 126.

3. The call of providence. If ye look to the conduct of providence towards yourselves and towards others, ye are warned to see to yourself in time. Many are dropping off into another world, and the living should lay it to heart.

4. The call of conscience. Heathens want not some checks that way, Rom. ii. 15. It is not to be thought, but those who live under

the gospel, have now and then the alarms from within, to get out of their bed of sloth. Is there not something within, that says ye have delayed long enough, and that more delay may be dangerous?

Mot. 3. Ye have opportunities and abilities put in your hand for to do your work by them, Luke xix. 13. God gives you them to do with: why then should ye not improve them? Consider, I pray you,

1. Opportunities and abilities are God's free gifts, given to be improved for him in his work. He does not light the candle of your life, and keep it burning, to put it under a bushel, or for you to use it against him. No wonder he is provoked in wrath to take away life, opportunities and abilities from them who make no good use of them.

2. Ye must give an account to God what ye have made of them. Luke xvi. 2; what use you have made of your years, your gospel-seasons, seasons of the Spirit's blowing, fair occasions of doing good presented to you: of your soundness of mind, strength of body, worldly substance, power and character. And it will be a heavy account, that so many years have been spent in God's world, and nothing done by the man for God and for his own soul; that so much health, strength, &c. &c. has been enjoyed, and all expended on the things of the world, the pursuit of lusts, &c.

3. The more you have had of them, and not improved, the greater will your condemnation be, Luke xii. 47, 48. We are all in the case of servants intrusted by the master, where some have more, some less; but the more one has, as on the one hand his conveniency for doing is greater, so on the other, the not improving of the greater trust will make the more heavy account.

Mot. 4. Ye are always doing something. Why, since it is so, will you not do your proper, great, and necessary work? Man's life is a continued train of actions, and the soul of man, like a watch, goes as fast when she goes false, as when she goes true. So, properly speaking, there is no man who does nothing at all with his opportunities and abilites: but every body does something with them; howbeit most men do not do their proper work with them. So men are guilty not only of not improving, but of misimproving, their opportunities and abilities. They do with them indeed, but they do not that with them which God specially gave them for.

1. Instead of doing their great work with them, they do next to nothing with them, like those, 2 Thess. iii. 11. *working not at all.* If we consider the business of most men's life, with the opportunities and abilities put in their hand for doing,; we will find that their whole life is such an insignificient piece of folly, as the action of

that foolish emperor, who pretended to lead out an army to fight the enemy, and all he did was to cause them gather shells by the sea-side. In a word, their life is a continued trifling; always doing, but never doing any thing to the purpose. Their precious time and abilities are spent in labouring for the wind; and that they will find when they come to step into another world, and cast up the account of their gain, Eccl. v. 16.

How many may say, I have been busy managing my house, but neglected my heart; gained silver and gold, but no saving grace; seen many harvests cut down, but mine own seed for glory is not sown yet; I have been careful for my body, but my soul is yet lying in a bleeding, perishing case? This is but trifling to spend your time in caring for your body, and neglecting your soul.

(1.) Thy body is mortal, but thy soul immortal. If men were to die like beasts, they might live like beasts, eat, drink, sleep, and work. But thy soul will remain in life, when thy body dies: when thy tongue begins to falter in thy mouth, and thou canst scarcely speak an articulate word, it will be vigorous: when friends are closing thine eyes, it will be going off to compear before the tribunal of God.

(2.) Thy soul craves more than the body. While the body is living, a little will serve its back and belly: and when dead a few feet of earth, which none will grudge it. But nothing less than an infinite good, that is, God himself, can satisfy the soul. He was a fool who said, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." Luke xii. 19.

(3.) Thy soul is of far more worth than the body. It is a spiritual, immortal substance, not to be laid in the balance with the cottage of clay. The soul is the diamond in the ring, the jewel in the cabinet, the dignified honourable inhabitant in the cottage of clay, Matth. xvi. 26.

What do they then but trifle, who are busy about the many things, forgetting the one thing needful? They are, in their manner of life, like the spider, that spends its own bowels to make up its web: and when all is done, at one stroke of a besom the poor spider is either killed in its own web, or by it drawn to death.

2. Instead of doing their great work with them, they do worse than nothing with them, they do mischief with them, Hos. xi. 2. and xiii. 6. Hence Solomon remarks, that "the prosperity of fools destroys them;" and the apostle remarks, that "the gospel is the savour of death unto death to many." They who do not improve their opportunities and abilities for God's honour and their own salvation, cannot miss to improve them to God's dishonour and their

own destruction: for the soul of man is of nature too active to be doing nothing at all: so if it be not doing good, it will be doing evil, for it must be doing something. If the matter were weighed in an even balance, it would be found, that many are at as much pains to ruin their own souls, as might possibly serve to save them, if they would but turn their pains to run in another channel. Many a rack Satan puts men on in his service, which the way of duty would set men free from, Job xxiv. 15—17. Jeremiah testifies, *they weary themselves to commit iniquity*, Jer. ix. 5. See Psal. vii. 14. Hab. ii. 13.

Now, since ye are still doing something with your opportunities and abilities, why will ye not do what ye should do with them? Ye are running in a race, why do ye not run in the right way, rather than in the wrong? We may say in some sense, that God does not call you to do more work than ye do; but other work, your great work.

Mot. 5. Your opportunities and abilities for doing will not last; but they will be short-lived. We have a day, and it is but a day we have, Luke xix. 42. an hireling's day, that is soon over, Job vii. 1. Time runs with a rapid course, and carries with it all our opportunities and abilities for doing our work. Our life is but a vapour, that soon evanisheth; a shadow that flees away, a handbreadth soon passed over. So,

1. You must now or never do your work, John ix. 4. Working-time will soon be gone. How can we be at ease, while so much time is over, and so little of our work by hand? Yet are not the shadows of the evening stretching out on many, while yet they have been in no due concern where to take up their eternal lodging?

2. If the work we have to do be sore, it will not be longsome. He that is tired with his journey may be refreshed, while he sees he is near the end. The saints' afflictions are but for a moment, their weeping but for a night: the watchmen will be called in from their posts.

Mot. 6. It is utterly uncertain to you when they shall come to an end. We are tenants at will, have no tack of our life, and know not how soon you may be called off, Matth. xxiv. 44, 46. So a moment's delay here may be an eternal loss. Our abilities may be at an end, before our time. However our time is uncertain as to the end of it, but, end when it will, there will be no more opportunity nor ability for doing.

Mot. 7. Our time when once gone can no more be recalled, no more than the candle burnt to snuff can be lighted again. It is bald in the hindhead, and there is no bringing of it back. As the tree falls, so it must lie.

Mot. last. If our great work be not done in time, we are undone for ever. If time is lost, our eternal salvation is lost.

Doct. II. Our life in this world is a journey, a going to the grave, to the state of the dead, where there is no doing of our work any more.

In discoursing from this doctrine, I shall,

I. Consider this journey we are on.

II. Shew that there is no doing of our work any more, when once we are come to our journey's end, to the state of the dead.

III. Make some improvement of each head separately.

I. I shall consider this journey we are on. And here we may take a view of,

1. The point where we begin our journey. We begin it from the womb, from the first moment of our receiving life there. As soon as we become living souls in the womb, we begin our journey to the grave. For then we are sinful creatures, Psal. li. 5. and therefore dying creatures. So we are going this journey, before we can set a foot on the ground, yea before we see the light of this world.

2. The point where it is ended. The term to which we are going, is the grave, the state of the dead. The travellers never halt till they be there. That is the place where all men meet from all the different places of the world. It is *the house appointed for all living*, Job xxx. 23. Their baiting-houses by the way may be very different, as a palace, and a cottage, but the lodging-house at the end of the journey is one. They lie down alike in the dust.

3. The journeying or travelling itself is the motion between these two points: and that is our living in this world. What is our living here? It is not a rest; that is not to be expected here. It is a motion, a journeying motion. And it is just a journeying, a going from the womb to the grave; a coming from the womb of our mother woman, and going in again to the womb of our mother earth, Job i. 21. That is the life we have here.

4. The place we go through in our journey to the grave in this present world; where the sun rising and setting makes days and nights, where are so many springs and harvests, summers and winters in our time; and, what is of all most remarkable, where God sends his messengers to meet us in our journey, to direct us to the road, by which we may get safe to the journey's end. Many look on this world as their resting-place, Psal. xlix. 11. and so as their resting-place, Luke xii. 19. But it is but our journeying-place, which we travel through; like a town in a traveller's road, who comes in at the one end of it, and goes out at the other, Eccl. i. 4.

Therefore the godly take it so, *confessing that they are strangers and pilgrims on the earth*, Heb. xi. 13.

5. The way we make in this journey is our time. Some have a longer, some a shorter way to their journey's end. But look back, and so much time as is over your head, so much way have ye made, and the nearer ye are to the end. Time goes, yea flies away, and as it goes, you quickly cut the way, so that it grows every moment shorter and shorter, and you are nearer the grave.

6. The several stages in our way, which accordingly are to some more, to others fewer, are to all but a very few, whereby we may know that it is not a long journey.

(1.) The first stage is infancy, that wherein the journey is begun. While we are in that first stage, we are going indeed to the grave, but poor we know not in the mean time whither we are going. Then we are under a necessity of dying, but know not that we must die, nor know we any thing of the state of the dead; and therefore can do nothing to prepare for it. Our concern in that stage is first confined to meat, and then extends to clothing, but no farther.

(2.) The second stage is childhood, wherein we are more advanced in our journey. Then do we begin to be informed, that there is such a thing as dying, as a heaven and a hell. But how rude are our notions of these things in that stage, and how unwelcome! They are like a dream to us, consisting of misshapen imaginations. How hard is it to be able to have any tolerable conception of the way to be saved, or so much as to conceive aright of the work we have to do! How little of the work can then be done till that stage be over? Things of the world are more natural; yet in that stage it is hard to ply to them, or to any thing but such trifles as will be the scorn of our riper years. So there are two stages over ere we have well begun to know where we are, and what we have to do. The morning is gone.

(3.) The next stage is youth, which is the forenoon of our day; the stage of our way, wherein we begin to know ourselves entering into this world. But how doth vanity and folly fill up that period of man's life, that the going through it is turned into a play or a dream, if not into a fit of madness in wickedness, casting off all bands, unless it be in some whom grace early reacheth. They think they have a great part of their way before them, and reckon it needless to be as yet much concerned about the journey's end, though two stages are over before that, and they will soon find themselves past that stage too. So true it is, that *childhood and youth are vanity*, Eccl. xi. 10.

(3.) The fourth stage is middle age, in which the foam of youth is

fallen, and the infirmities of old age have not yet overtaken the man, and is therefore called *the best estate*, Psal. xxxix. 5. Now he is in best case in point of wisdom and management. His thoughts are ripened, and his strength is fit for executing the product of these his riper thoughts. But how is he then wrapt up in a thicket of cares of this world, that often he cannot find the way out seriously to consider his latter end? But this also is soon over, and he quickly arrives at the

(5.) Last stage, old age. Then his sun is remarkably turned, it is fast declining, and he remembers the days of his youth and middle age as waters that pass away. They sometimes run full; but now that brook is dried up. If his judgment continues firm, yet he is ordinarily beset with infirmities of body, whereby he is rendered more unfit for action: and sometimes judgment and memory fail too. The tabernacle is going down, till at length it lie along on the earth, to rise no more till the heavens be no more. So the days come wherein men have no pleasure: and then quickly the mourners go about the streets; the man is at his journey's end.

These are the few stages in our way: but it is but a few that see them all. Some find the end of the journey in the first stage, some in the second, *&c.*

7. *Lastly*, The steps we make in our way on this journey. Every breathing we make, every pulse that beats, is a step in the way. Whether we sleep or wake, our breath and blood are going: and so we are going on toward the grave. Infinite wisdom has determined how often we shall breathe in and out the air, how often our blood shall go the round in our bodies, and what number of pulses it shall make. These are continued one on the back of another, as so many steps by which this journey is made. And at length the last pulse beats, the last breathing is made, whereby one gives up the ghost: and that is the last step, and so we are at our journey's end.

I shall now make some improvement of this first head.

Use I. Of information. Is our life in this world a journey, a going to the grave? then,

1. This life is a transitory, passing thing, that will not last, but will soon be over, Job viii. 9. Form right notions of life from this; you will find it is but a short preface to a long eternity; an inconsiderable point between two extremes, the womb and the grave; so short, that Solomon passes it by in his assigning a time to every thing, Eccl. iii. 2.

2. The state of the dead, and what lies beyond it, is our state of continuance, which we are to be mainly concerned for. This life is our journeying; at the end of our journey we will find the place of

our abode. The grave is our long home, heaven or hell our eternal home. This world is but the passage, as through a strange country to our home. Therefore Job was in the right, to render himself familiar with it, chap. xvii. 14. *I have said to corruption, Thou art my father: to the worm, Thou art my mother, and my sister.*

3. Man at his best estate is vanity. Consider him in his prime, when his health and strength are at their meridian, death is gaining ground of him: however stately he goes, he is going towards the grave, however little he thinks of it. While he riseth, he doth but swell like a bubble of water, which in a moment is broken and gone.

4. There is great need to see how we improve it, that we misspend it not, Matth. v. 25. We came into this world without any thought of our own, how to be provided for in it. But wo to us in the other world, if we take not thought while we are in the way.

Use 2. Of exhortation to several things. Is our life a journey to the grave, to the state of the dead? then,

1. Acquaint yourselves timely with the God and Lord of that land, and make up your peace and friendship with him, that when ye come there, ye may be treated as his friends, and not as his enemies, Job xxii. 21. *Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto thee.* For if that be neglected while we are in the way, sad will be our lot at the end of the journey, Matth. v. 25. God is now willing to be at peace with us in his Son, who is Lord of that land, *has the keys of hell and of death*, Rev. i. 18. and is now offering himself and his salvation to us, Rev. xxii. 17. yea offering himself in a marriage-covenant, Hos. ii. 16; Matth. xxii. 4. It will then be our wisdom, to see that our Maker, the Lord of that place, be our Husband now: and then be sure he will see well to us there.

2. Be sure to take the safe road in that journey; and beware of the road of destruction. All the world is on the journey; but they are divided into two companies, taking two different roads, the road of eternal life, and the road of eternal death. The safe road is the way of holiness, Isa. xxxv. 8. *An high way shall be there, and it shall be called the way of holiness, i. e.* the holy way, *viz.* Christ the personal way, John xiv. 6. and gospel holiness and obedience, the real way, Col. ii. 6. It is a strait way, that will not allow room for the sinful latitude which corrupt nature affects, and therefore ye will get but little company upon it. The road of destruction is the way of sin, the way of unbelief and unholiness. It is a broad way, and there the multitude goes: there go the profane, there the grossly ignorant, there the mere moralist, there the gross and close hypocrite, Matth. vii. 13, 14. Take your marks of the way by the word, Psal. xvii. 4.

3. Associate yourselves with those on the safe road, and beware of chusing for your companions those on the broad way, Prov. xiii. 20; Psal. xvi. 3. Travellers desire company in their journey; but then they chuse those who are going their road, not those who are going a contrary one. If they do, one may conclude that they have left their road for love of company. And many sad instances of this there are on this journey, 1 Cor. xv. 33. Hence many sometimes hopeful, by the society they chuse, first turn untender, then loose professors, and at last apostates: and so fall from the threshold of heaven, down to the pit, Psal. cxxv. *ult.*

4. Beware of forgetting that ye are on a journey, travellers, strangers, and pilgrims in the world, Heb. xi. 13. This world that we go through is very charming to the corrupt heart; insomuch that many come to be so taken with it, that they think themselves at home in it. And so they mind nothing but building tabernacles in it, resting and solacing themselves therein. They seek no better home, they desire no better, Phil. iii. 19. and so they are ruined when they awake out of their dream, if they awake not timely. But see that ye count heaven your home, the world the place of your pilgrimage, and your present life your journey homeward.

5. Beware of loading yourselves in your journey, Heb. xii. 1. Men on a journey will be very loath to carry needless weights about them, but endeavour what they can to be as light and expedite as may be. But alas! most men on this journey think never to get enough on their back; and what is it? just a backful of thick clay, Hab. ii. 6. a defiling load of the world. Men lade themselves this way, still grasping at more and more of the world, laying field to field, till they are just overwhelmed with the business of this life, and by anxiety about the things of the world, and undue eagerness, whether they have little or much. They go best through the world, that lade themselves least with it, 2 Cor. vii. 29—31.

6. Take heed of carrying along with you such things as are apt to entangle you in the road, and cause you to fall, Heb. xii. 1. *Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us.* A metaphor taken from long garments, that cannot miss to retard one on a journey. Unmortified lusts are these entangling things, especially the predominant one. In our way there are many stumbling blocks, and these dispose us to fall over them. In it are many snares, and these catch men by their unmortified lusts, as thorns in the way catching hold of the traveller's loose garments. And many a mire are sinners by this means cast down in, who do not by faith, mortification, and watchfulness, gird up the loins of their mind.

7. Let not afflictions, crosses, and hardships in this world sink

too deep with you: for you are neither to stay with it nor them, 1 Cor. vii. 30. Ye are on a journey, not in your place of continuance. You need the less to value the frowns of a present world; for ere long ye will be beyond them, and both the smiles and frowns of it will be buried in oblivion. The consideration of our short and uncertain time in the world, would be an excellent antidote against immoderate sorrow; for we are here but as actors in a play, where it is no great matter whether one be the king or the peasant; for in a little time the fable is ended, and each appears in the station he really is.

8. Learn to fetch your comforts in your journey from the place ye are going to, the other world, Heb. xi. 13. And the doctrine of the gospel contained in the Bible is the storehouse of these comforts, and faith is the mean whereby to draw them out, Psal. xciv. 19. and xvii. 13. The believing meditation of the better world, is the best stay for the traveller's heart, under the toil and hardships of the way. There is such a thing as the traveller's song, to be sung by the way. David had learned it, and he tells you where, Psal. cxix. 54. *Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage.*

9. Be not solicitious for great things in the world, but be content with what Providence lays to your hand, Jer. xlv. 4, 5. Being on a journey, it is no great matter though your accommodations be not pompous. Men on a road do not expect feasts, nor do they value them. A traveller's dinner is soon over; he takes as he comes to, for he may not stay. O that we could learn the lesson, and labour to secure ease and fulness to ourselves in the place whither we are going, and keep up a holy indifference as to our entertainment on the road.

10. Correct your vain imaginations and conclusions, in all conditions of life, by a lively faith of his truth. In a time of prosperity, men are apt to be full of towering imaginations, Psal. xlix. 11; they feed themselves with golden dreams, put adversity far from their thoughts, still reckoning on to-morrow, and that to-morrow will be as this day. But correct the mistake; ye are on a journey, and may be at the end of it ere ye are aware. In adversity the man is apt to say, It will never be over: but that is a mistake too; for our sorrows as well as our joys here are short lived, and will soon be at an end.

11. *Lastly*, Let preparation for death be the main business of your life. For your abiding happiness and misery depends on what issue your journey takes: and now is the time, the only time to fix that point. He that lives in Christ shall die in him, and dying

in him be happy for ever. And he who gets not into Christ while he lives, will find the door shut when he is dead, and no more access to salvation. Therefore prepare in time. See to your state, that ye be in that respect fit to die; that ye be out of your natural state, and brought into a state of grace. And watch, and enure yourselves to a dying frame, that ye may be always as on the wing for your departure.

II. The next thing to be considered is, That there is no doing of our work any more, when once we are come to our journey's end, to the state of the dead.

There are two things that will set this in a clear light.

1. Then our day is gone, and the night is come, John ix. 4. The state of the dead is called a *night*, because the darkness of the night puts an end to working, as the light of the day gives an opportunity for it. When death is come, the sun of the gospel is set on the man; and to those who burnt day-light while they had it, God will not set up a new light in the grave, which is "the land of darkness, and the shadow of death; a land of darkness, as darkness itself, and of the shadow of death, without any order, and where the light is as darkness," Job ix. 21, 22.

2. Than the sentence for eternity is passed on men. The next step after death is to the tribunal of God, where men are judged and sentenced according to their deeds done in the flesh, Heb. ix. 27. So,

(1.) The time of God's patience with impenitent sinners is at an end. The door is shut, Matth. xxv. 10. The mercy and goodness of God opens a door of grace for sinners for term of life, long-suffering patience keeps it open during that time; but the term of life being expired, the door is shut, sinners can be waited on no longer, justice takes place.

(2.) Our probationary time is at an end, and our state is fixed unalterably for all the ages of eternity, Luke xv. 26. While men's life in this world lasts, they are on their trials for another world: but sentence being passed after death, they are brought to a fixed point of happiness or misery.

I shall conclude this subject with some improvement of this head.

USE I. Of information. Hence we may learn,

1. That the time of our life in this world is exceedingly precious; it is a golden spot, more to be valued by a guilty creature than all the wealth of the world, as being the opportunity, and the only opportunity for settling the business of our eternal salvation. Then the Lord is on a throne of grace for us, then is the time of his dispensing pardons, then is the time of the ship of the gospel lying in our harbour, bound for Immanuel's land, ready to take in passengers;

which if it once hoist sail, and set off to sea, the passengers are for ever left hopeless on the shore. O how inexcusable are men trifling away their precious hours!

2. That the moment of death is of vast consequence, inasmuch as it is the concluding point of our working time, the time of our trial, immediately succeeded by an unalterable state in eternal happiness or misery. For as the tree then falls, it must lie for ever. If one prays, communicates, &c. wrong at a time, he may have access to mend it: but once dying wrong, there is no helping of that.

3. Happy they who dispatch their work timely, while they are in the land of the living: for their work is done, before working time is over, Rev. xiv. 13. When they come to die, they have no more ado but to die, and that of itself is sufficient work to fill one's hand.

4. Sad is the case of those who misspend their time, whose life is at an end, before their great work for eternity is done. For their case is hopeless, since there is no doing of their great work then any more.

USE 2. Of exhortation. What ye have to do, do quickly, without delay. And,

1. Do your salvation-work without delay, Phil. ii. 12. Ye are by nature lost sinners, but by grace ye may be saved. But none can expect to be brought into a state of salvation in a morning dream. The work of faith, repentance, regeneration, and mortification, is not easy. Give yourselves no rest, till once ye are brought into a state of peace with God, till ye have once shot the gulf as to condemnation, and your eternal happiness be secured. Then will ye live holily and happily; and come death when it will, your great work is done, ye are habitually prepared for it. If otherwise, death may take you unawares, and in a moment make you for ever miserable.

2 Do the work of your generation without delay. Consider what is the work of your station and relation, the work for God and the good of others that providence puts an opportunity in your hand to do: and do it quickly; for if ye delay it, the opportunity may be for ever taken out of your hand. Consider,

(1.) To put off your great work to another time yet to come, is inconsistent with a sincere purpose of setting about it, 1 Pet. 2. 3. Who having burning coals in his bosom, would put off throwing them out till a more convenient season, another hour, or another minute? He that is not fit to-day, will be less so to-morrow.

(2.) The longer ye delay, the harder will your work be, when it comes to the setting to. Sin is like a water, the farther from the head, the deeper, and the harder to get over. The longer ye con-

tinue in sin, the heart grows harder, the understanding more blind, the will more perverse, and the affections more carnal.

(3.) *Lastly*, It is most foolish and unreasonable to delay. How can one delay a work till to-morrow, which must be done, else he is ruined for ever, when he is not sure of another hour? Jam. iv. 13. 14. "Go to now, ye that say, To-day or to-morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy, and sell, and get gain: whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow: for what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." Remember what was said to the rich man, Luke xii. 20. "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?" I hope we are agreed about the necessity of your dispatching your great work: the only question is, When? God says, To-day. Reason says so too; for to-morrow is not yours. The conclusion then is, Do it immediately. Up then and be doing.

THE

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERS

OF

TRUE BELIEVERS.

X. IN RELATION TO THE HAPPY EFFECT OF CHRIST'S GOOD-WILL IN THE WORD OF GRACE.*

LUKE xix. 5.

Zaccheus, make haste, and come down: for to-day I must abide at thy house.

THOUGH our sun of the gospel at this day is a winter sun, having light, but little heat, ye and we, ministers and people, must be doing. It is good to be in Christ's way: he loves to surprise sinners with a cast of free grace: whereof we have a notable instance in the text.

Christ passing through Jericho, and a great throng being about him, Zaccheus is taken with a mighty desire to see him: but being a little man, and our Saviour but of an ordinary stature, not like Saul, who, by the height of his stature overtopping all about him, might have been seen by a little man even in a crowd; (God shewed in Christ of how little value such things are,) he, to satisfy his curiosity, ran before, and gets up into a tree, to see what like a man he was. In his Bible, and in Christ's doctrine and miracles, he might have seen him by an eye of faith to be the Son of God and Saviour of the world: but he was spiritually blind. He had no particular business with him; he was healthy and wealthy, and felt no need of him; otherwise he would have cried to him, as the blind man did, *Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me*, Luke xviii. 38. He only wanted a sight of a man so talked of.

* This Sermon was preached at Ettrick, June 11, 1727, immediately before the administration of the Lord's supper.

Christ coming to the place makes a halt, for there was the time and place for the dawning of everlasting love on Zaccheus. And,

1. He gives him a look, and fixes his eyes on him; a sign that he had a serious purpose about him. Such a look set Peter's heart a-melting; and there is no reason to doubt but this place surprised Zaccheus, made his heart move out of its place, and set it a-trembling, not knowing but instantly he might make him drop down dead off the tree before the multitude, considering how severely God threatened gazing at mount Sinai, and how dear it cost those of Bethshemesh for looking into the ark.

2. He gives him a word, a word of grace, no less surprising than the look, which instantly changed and transported his trembling heart, "Zaccheus, make haste, and come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house.'" That it was such a word, a savingly-effectual call to him, joyfully closed with by faith, ver. 6. appears from (1.) The visible effect of it in true repentance, ver. 8. "Behold, Lord, (says he,) the half of my goods I give to the poor: and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold." (2.) The testimony of Christ as to his faith, ver. 9. "And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is the son of Abraham." Say not, that there is nothing here but about coming down from a tree; for Christ's word is like himself, that has a glory in it not to be perceived but by the spiritual eye. So it is with the word of the gospel to this day; they whose eyes are opened, and hearts touched with it, see a glory and feel a power in it that is hid to all the multitude beside. Wherefore the sense of these words was a compound one, made up of an external part, lying open to the view of the whole multitude that heard them, and an internal part, mystical and secret, and clear to Zaccheus, however hid from others. They are like Jonathan's *crying after the lad, Make speed, haste, stay not.* Of whom it is said, *And Jonathan's lad gathered up the arrows, and came to his master. But the lad knew not any thing: only Jonathan and David knew the matter,* 1 Sam. xx. 38, 39. In the words then,

1. There is an open display of the grace and good-will of a Saviour to Zaccheus in particular, proposed to him to be believed and credited. And it consists of two parts.

(1.) Christ's readiness and willingness to meet with him, to receive and be received by him: so the grace of union with Christ was proposed to him. This was couched in these words, *Zaccheus come down;* as if he had said, "Zaccheus, come away to me, I wait you here to receive and be received by you. There is a thronging about me, but whatever is of them, I have a particular good-will to you."

(2.) Christ's inviting himself to Zaccheus' house, and so a desire and design of communion with him, though he was a sinner, such a sinner as many in that multitude would abhor being his guest. But he shows a good-will to him, to come over all that, to entertain and be entertained by him.

2. There is a peremptory call to him to embrace this grace and goodwill, proposed to him to be complied with, *Zaccheus, make haste, come down*, viz. to me. And here there is,

(1.) How it was to be embraced, *viz.* by Zaccheus's coming to Christ. A bodily motion was in this case necessary, but the spiritual motion of the soul by faith was the great thing aimed at. Believing the grace and good-will of Christ displayed to him in Christ's word of grace, he is required to betake himself to it, by trusting on it for his salvation, as heaven's security granted him, and claiming and using it as his own, in all the effects thereof in communion with him whose grace it is.

2. The manner of the coming required. [1.] It is a coming down. Zaccheus was sitting on high, and looking down on Christ, when Christ began with him. So is every sinner before the good work is begun on them. But the word of power calls them down from their heights; and coming to Christ is coming down from them. Humiliation of soul is twisted with true faith, and runs through the whole of it. [2.] A speedy coming down, *Make haste*, &c. "Haste as if the tree were breaking and falling with your weight, and you could not sit safe there one moment longer." Whatever off-puts the sinner makes as to coming to Christ, while the heart is not touched with the power of grace, as soon as efficacious grace touches it, the sinner can no longer resist, but comes to Christ like a sandy brae sliding down in a break.

The doctrine I observe from the words is,

Doct. When Christ and the sinner have the happy meeting for union and communion. Christ gives the sinner a word of grace, that discovers a good-will in him to the sinner in particular, and hales the sinner down from his heights away to the Lord Jesus. Thus the happy meeting is brought about.

In handling this doctrine, I shall consider,

I. The Lord's discovering a good-will to the sinner by a word of grace.

II. The Lord's haling down the sinner from his heights to himself by his word of grace.

III. Apply in an use of exhortation.

I. I am to consider the Lord's discovering a good-will to the sinner by a word of grace. This ye may take up in these five things.

1. The word of the law goes before the word of grace to the sinner. Zaccheus got a piercing look, before he got the word of grace. The holy law glances into the dark soul, and awakens it: the Sinai lightnings lighten the sinner who was going on in darkness, and give him a broad view of the holiness of God, the spirituality of the law, the sinfulness of his life, heart, and nature, Psal. l. 21. "These things hast thou done, and I kept silence (says God to the sinner): thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thyself: but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes." The word of grace is not valid without this previous effect of the law.

2. The sinner begins to fear a design of ruin upon him. Therefore the law is called *the ministration of death*, 2 Cor. iii. 7. The prodigal presently cries, *I perish*. Guilt lying on the conscience stings, and makes secret whispers within the man's breast, that fill him with jealousies of a design in heaven for his destruction, as we find in the case of the Israelites in the wilderness, Numb. xvii. 10, 12. "And the Lord said unto Moses, Bring Aaron's rod again, before the testimony, to be kept for a token against the rebels; and thou shalt quite take away their murmurings from me, that they die not. And the children of Israel spake unto Moses, saying, Behold, we die, we perish, we all perish." And this may haunt the man like a ghost many a day; and can hardly miss to do so, after an awakening, till the soul come to Christ by believing.

3. The Lord sends the gospel to the fearful jealous sinner. That is the word of grace, wherein Christ's love and good-will to self-destroying sinners is held forth. And it is a proper mean to cure the sinner of his secret jealousies of him, and to bring him to believe his good-will towards him. There he is represented as Saviour of the world by office, and consequently as his Saviour, 1 John iv. 14. *We have seen and do testify*, says the apostle, *that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world;* an endearing, heart-quieting character: the good design of his coming in that character, John xii. 47. *I came not to judge the world, but to save the world:* and of his Father's sending him, John iii. 17. *For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved:* his good-will to the work of their salvation, 1 Tim. ii. 3, 4. "For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." Yea, there down-right promises of life and salvation to sinners indefinitely are held forth as Christ's legacies left them to be enjoyed by believing and applying them; hence says the apostle, Heb. iv. 1. "Let us fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it." Nay, the

benefits contained in these promises are declared to be so far theirs, that they may come to Christ as their own Saviour, and take possession of them by faith, as their own mercies, 1 John v. 11. *This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life: and this life is in his Son.*

4. The Lord makes the word of grace touch the sinner's particular case. The blessed words of the gospel holding in general to the man, are like so many arrows flying over his head: he thinks they may be very true to others, but he finds them not directed to him; and the good-will in them, he thinks, is to others, but not to him. At length the word touches his particular case, as surely as if such a word had been put in the bible just for him, or as if the minister had known his case, and were speaking just to him. *Zaccheus*, says Christ; he names him as if they had been acquainted. Hence the spouse relates in her case, Cant. iii. 3, 4. "The watchmen that go about the city found me: to whom I said, Saw ye him whom my soul loveth? It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found him whom my soul loveth." Thus the sinner perceives that Christ has something to say to him.

5. *Lastly*, The Lord opens and applies the word of grace secretly to the sinner in particular, though it be spoken to all in general; which is as it were an internal word. This is called the *demonstration of the Spirit*, 1 Cor. ii. 4. Christ breathes grace and good-will to sinners in the gospel: but they cannot perceive it, men cannot make them see it: but the Spirit demonstrates it to them powerfully. He shines on the word of the grace of the gospel, and illustrates it, on the dark mind of the sinner, and illuminates it, so that he sees that word of grace and the good-will in it is really to him in particular, and firmly believes it, ver. 5. the Spirit with the word attesting the good-will of Christ to the sinner in the word of his grace. Thus the same Spirit, who before applied the doctrine of the law to the sinner in particular, for his conviction, applies the gospel to him in particular, to bring him to Christ by faith. And the effect of it is, he believes the gospel with a particular application of the grace and good-will in it to himself, howbeit it may be attended with doubts and fears still, Mark ix. 24. *Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.* But the faith of Christ's good-will to the sinner is so far above the doubts of it, that it hales the sinner down from all his heights to Jesus Christ and this is his free grace, to venture his all there.

II. I proceed to consider the Lord's haling down the sinner from his heights to himself by his word of grace: which we may take up in these four things.

I. The soul is humbled by it, and tumbled down to the dust of Christ's feet. And this appears in these things.

(1.) The soul finds it has nothing but the grace and good-will of Christ, left to it, to trust to now, either for a rest to the conscience or to the heart. All its law-righteousness, all its big expectations of satisfaction from the creature, tumble down like a shooting brae under its feet, Jer. xvi. 19. *The Gentiles*, says the prophet, *shall come unto thee from the ends of the earth, and shall say, Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and things wherein there is no profit.*

(2.) The soul sees its utter unworthiness of Christ and his grace, that it has nothing to commend it to him, Matth. viii. 8. *Lord*, says the centurion to Christ, *I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof;* and wonders at the matchless freedom of grace to such a wretched creature. The glory of Christ and of his grace and good-will shines so bright, that it sinks the sinner to nothing in his own eyes.

(3.) The soul is content of Christ on any terms, and with Paul says, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* Acts ix. 6. The man used to be off and on with Christ before; he would be his on such terms, but not on such terms: but all the exceptions and reserves are thrown by now, and now he would have Christ and his grace at any rate.

2. The soul is drawn by it, John xii. 32. *I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.* There is grace in the Mediator's lips, heavenly oratory which the sinner can no more resist. His former backwardness is killed with Christ's good-will appearing in the word of grace: he is a captive to the love of Christ.

3. The soul is impressed with divine authority by it, requiring it to believe on Christ, 1 John iii. 23. *This is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ.* The sinner sees glorious Christ held forth to him in that word, and feels not only upon his heart the weight of absolute need pressing him forward, but also upon his conscience the weight of the authority of heaven pressing him forward; and as by the former he may not, by the latter he dare not but embrace him, over the belly of felt unworthiness.

4. *Lastly*, The soul is hastened by it to Christ, Psal. lxviii. 31. *Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God.* The sinner puts off not a moment longer, but comes freely away to Christ, like water that has got a free vent, Is. ii. 2. *All nations shall flow unto it.* The soul lets go all its other holds, and casts itself on the Mediator's grace and good-will in the word of grace for all, and holds by that,

resolved never to let that hold go. Thus Christ and the sinner meet.

I come now to apply this in an use of exhortation, in two branches.

First, If ever ye would have union and communion with Christ, discern now and believe the grace and good-will of Christ towards you in particular, in the word of his grace which he is sending you this day, viz. the gospel. Do not think that he is overlooking you, however sinful and miserable your case is; but open your eyes and see, and believe him breathing grace and good-will to you in particular.

Object. What warrant have I to believe Christ's good-will to me, who am a poor unholy creature? *Ans.* If ye were holy, sanctified by faith, you might believe not only his good-will to, but complacency in you. But as it is, you have a warrant to believe his good-will to you, since he is holding out himself to you to be believed on as one who *justifies the ungodly*, Rom. iv. 5. washes the unclean in his own blood, seeks and saves the lost.

1. I ask you, Are ye not warranted to believe the gospel? Mark i. 16. Can ye believe the gospel, and not believe Christ's grace and good-will to sinners of mankind? Surely not; for it is the word of his grace. Then I ask, Can ye think ye are not required to believe more than devils believe? they believe the gospel in the general, and Christ's good-will to sinners of mankind, but not to them: and this is that which fills them with rage against him and them. Therefore ye are required to believe it with particular application to yourselves, namely, Christ's good-will to you.

2. The venom of unbelief lies in making God a liar, not believing the record that God hath given of his Son, 1 John v. 10. But the most desperate unbelievers believe Christ's good-will to sinners in general, but not to them in particular: therefore Christ's good-will to them in particular is a truth, and it is their crying sin and ruin that they will not believe it.

3. It is impossible to believe on Christ for salvation, unless we believe his good-will to us in particular; therefore since ye are warranted for the one, John iii. 16. ye are for the other.

Object. But how is it possible for me to see Christ's good will to to me, seeing I can neither look into his heart, nor into the decree of election? *Ans.* How do you see an honest man's good-will to you, since you cannot look into his heart, nor see what thoughts he had towards you when you were in the womb? Do you not see it in his words and carriage to you? So you may see Christ's good will to you in his word of grace and dealing with you. He declares

he came to save the world, John xii. 47. consequently to save you who are of that society. Is not that good-will to you?—*to save that which was lost*, Luke xix. 10. and you are lost. He is come in the character of *Saviour of the world*, 1 John iv. 14. and therefore he is become your Saviour. He holds out to you his righteousness, his promise to be believed on by you for your salvation. Is not that good-will?

Object. But there is not a word of me in particular in the gospel. *Ans.* There is just as much of you in particular in the promise of of the gospel, as there is in the curse of the law. John iii. 16, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life," is a proposition as universal as Gal. iii. 10, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." But the natural conscience of sin helps to believe the latter, but makes it hard to believe the former.

Object. But there is one thing I can never get over, and when I would be most serious, then it is sure to be upon me: so I think the Lord has even left it to be a secret sign that he has no good-will to me, and that I must perish in the end. *Ans.* If that thing be the burden of your soul, as it seems to be, you will be making recourse to Christ's blood and Spirit against it; and though you lose many battles, you will certainly be victorious in the war. See the case of the apostle Paul, Rom. vii. 21, 24, 25. "I find a law, that when I would do good evil is present with me. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." The evil design of the divine dispensation in leaving it, is a malicious insinuation of the serpent, Matth. xxv. 24. to discredit the gospel. But the gospel gives you an honourable account of it, 2 Cor. xii. 8, 9. "For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, (says Paul) that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness." To see a poor creature maintaining an obstinate battle with the serpent, after many a fall rising with the tear in his eye, and falling to it again, declares the power of grace more than his going with an even-up back during the chaining of the enemy, would do.

Secondly, If ever ye would have union and communion with Christ, come down then from your heights, and receive Christ breathing good-will to you, trusting on his grace and good-will in the word for your salvation. And,

1. Come down from the height of your expectations from the law,

your own righteousness, whatever ye can do or suffer: and receive Christ for righteousness, for a rest to your conscience.

2. Come down from the height of your expectations from the creature, and receive Christ for a rest to your heart.

3. *Lastly*, Come down from the height of your jealousies of Christ, by which ye are climbing up to heaven presumptuously, and breaking in to God's secret things, and receive Christ who is down here in his word of grace, breathing good-will to you. Hearken to what the apostle says, "The righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above): or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead). But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith which we preach," Rom. x. 6, 7, 8. Make haste down, or ye will fall headlong into the pit; for the law will not bear your weight, the creature will fail you, and the sheet of the gospel, wherein Christ's grace and good-will to you is spread out, will be drawn up to heaven, and ye will see no more of it for ever.

THE

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERS

OF

TRUE BELIEVERS.

XI. IN RELATION TO THEIR ENTERING INTO REST IN CHRIST.*

HEBREWS iv. 3.

For we which have believed do enter into rest.

OUR Lord Jesus has been inviting you to come to him by believing, and many have professed to give him the hand. Here is a touchstone whereby ye may try, whether ye have believed indeed or not: *For we which have believed do enter into rest.*

In ver. 1. the apostle had exhorted the Hebrews to take heed and fear lest they missed or fell short of the blessed rest, of which they had the promise left them in the gospel. This he enforceth from this consideration, that they were in the same state with respect to it, as the ancient Israelites to Canaan. On the one hand, as the Israelites had the promise of Canaan, but lost it through their not believing the promise, ver. 2; so we have the gospel, the promise of the spiritual rest; but if we believe not, we will never enter into it, but fall as the body of Israel in the wilderness. On the other hand, as Caleb and Joshua who believed the promise of Canaan, did enter into it; so we believers do enter into the spiritual rest. Thus you see the connection of the text with the two preceding verses.

In the words we have two things to be considered.

1. A sweet experience declared, *We do enter into rest.* It is an experience of a spiritual and heavenly benefit; whereof Caleb and Joshua's experience was the type, Josh. xix. And here consider,

(1.) The benefit experienced; that is, *rest.* Rest is a sweet thing,

* The sermons on this subject were preached at Ettrick, begun June 18, 1727, the Lord's day immediately following the administration of the Lord's supper there.

as all weary labourers do know. But of all rest, soul-rest is the sweetest: and such is this. The rest here meant is the rest held forth in the promise of the gospel, ver. 1, 2. And if ye ask where it is found? it is not in heaven only, for the believer enters into it now: but it is in Christ, whether in earth or heaven. This appears from the sinner's entering into it by faith, the nature of the rest, ver. 10. the apostle's opposing believers' partaking of Christ, to unbelievers' losing their part in Canaan, chap. iii. 14. and is agreeable to the promise of the gospel, Matth. xi. 28. "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

(2.) The experience of that benefit, *We do enter.* He says not, *We shall enter*, viz. at death; but in the present time, *We do* enter. The believer's rest is not altogether put off to another life. It is not complete indeed, till we come to heaven; but it is begun here, we are entering into it, and do enter. And the very entrance of the rest is sweet.

2. The parties in whose name this experience is declared, *We which have believed*, viz. in Christ. Unbelievers still remain in their restless condition, but faith in Christ lays the soul to rest. Christ is the resting-place of poor sinners: and faith uniting the soul to Christ, the soul enters into rest in him.

The words afford the following doctrine.

Doct. They who have truly believed in Christ, do enter into rest in him.

Here I shall,

I. Shew who they are that have truly believed.

II. Consider the entering of those that have believed into rest in Jesus Christ.

III. Apply the whole.

I. I am to shew who they are that have truly believed. I am not here to enter on the nature of faith at large: only with a view to the gospel-message sent you last day, I am to shew who have believed in two particulars.

First, They who have believed, have believed the grace and good will of Christ to them in particular, held forth in his word of grace to them, viz. a good-will to save them from sin and wrath. Behold the echo of the believing soul to the word of grace, 2 Tim. i. 15. "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." Christ has been at much pains to shew his good-will to you and every one of you in particular: I ask you, Do ye now believe it? or are ye not as yet convinced of it? There are three sorts of unbelievers in this point.

1. Those who do not believe what the gospel holds out as good-will, to be good-will to them. Such unbelievers are all carnally secure sinners, unwilling to part with their lusts; Jer. ii. 25. "Thou saidst, There is no hope. No, for I have loved strangers, and after them will I go." If Christ in his gospel should shew a good-will to make them healthy, and wealthy, and well in the world, they could believe that to be good-will to them: or if he could restrict his good-will to the keeping them out of hell, when they die. But all that is said of good-will to them otherwise, they look on as idle tales, Psal. iv. 6. And so they treat as airy notions, what they have no heart for, Prov. xvii. 16. Nay, when they look on it in earnest, they take it for ill-will, to rob them of what they have most delight in, Rom. vii. 7. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. Gal. iv. 16. "Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?"

2. Those who do not believe the grace and good-will of Christ to them to be pure grace and good-will. Such unbelievers are all unhumbled souls: they have never got a true sight of their own exceeding sinfulness and utter unworthiness; so it is easy for them to believe Christ's good-will to them, for they never saw any difficulty in that, *How shall I put thee among the children?* But then it is not grace and good-will, but due good-will to them, that they believe: and that is not divine faith, Rom. iv. 4, 5, 16. wrought by the Spirit.

3. Those who do see their own sinfulness, that they cannot see nor believe Christ's grace and good-will to them. Such unbelievers are awakened sinners, on whom the law has its effect, but not the gospel, Isa. liii. 4. They have a jealousy of Christ reigning in them, that they cannot believe that ever his heart can be towards them. And so however they may believe the truth of the gospel as to others, they believe it not with respect to themselves.

Now all these are unbelievers, who have not entered into rest, but continue restless. They do not believe the gospel, receive not Christ's testimony, John iii. 32. make God a liar, 1 John v. 10, 11. They go no farther in their belief of the gospel than devils, Mark i. 24, 25.

Quest. By what characters may they be known, who have believed in this point?

Ans. 1. They have believed Christ's grace and good-will to them, over the belly of staring guilt, and felt unworthiness, Luke xv. 18. Convinced that the Lord would have been just, and done them no wrong, to have set himself against them for ever; they have yet believed his unhired good-will to them held forth in his word of grace. so their faith stands on the foot of mere grace, pure grace.

2. They have believed his grace and good-will towards the drawing them out of the miry clay of their sinfulness, as well as out from the rolling waves of guilt, the curse, and eternal wrath. For this is the good-will of Christ testified in the gospel, Matth. i. 21. *He shall save his people from their sins;* and faith believes that good-will as held forth in the gospel. So they reckon it good-will to them, that they may be made holy, that the power of sin be broken in them, and believe such a good-will to them in Christ Jesus. They would as fain be sanctified, as one would be freed from his running sores, and believe the great Physician's good-will to their cure, Micah vii. 19. "He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us: he will subdue our iniquities: and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea."

3. The only foundation of their belief of it, is the faithfulness of God in his word of grace, Gal. iii. 2. "This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" They see so much of their own vileness, that if men or angels had said it, they could not have believed it: but because they see God himself has said it, they cannot but believe it. The Spirit of God has demonstrated to them Christ's good-will in the word of the gospel, and that that word is God's own word: so they are overcome into a belief of it. So the word of the gospel is the anchor of their souls, which they hold by alone, whatever waves come on them to beat them off from that their belief.

4. *Lastly*, They have betaken themselves to the grace and good-will of Christ in his word of grace, and laid all their weight over upon it. Whatever jealousies of Christ's good-will were hanging about them, proceeding from conscience of guilt, and Satan's subtile insinuations; they have broke through them all, and cast themselves into the arms of free grace, Mark ix. 34. This brings to

The *Second* particular, They who have believed, have believed on Christ as their own Saviour for life and salvation to them, Acts xv. 11. "We believe that, through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved." Thus believing the Son, and believing on the Son, believing the gospel, and receiving and resting on Christ, are inseparably connected, John iii. 36. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life." They who believe the gospel, testifying Christ's grace and good-will to them in particular, cannot but receive and rest on Christ breathing that good-will towards them; as you see was exemplified in Zaccheus, Luke xix. 6. *He made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully.* Their reigning jealousy being cured by their faith of the word of his grace, they cannot but throw themselves into the arms of his grace, and embrace him as their all.

This believing lies precisely in trusting on him as our Saviour: the sinner trusting to the report of his good-will to him, trusts on him accordingly for all, Is. xxvi. 4. Psal. ii. *ult.* And so he,

1. Commits himself to him, as one doth quietly commit himself to an able person, whose good-will to him he believes, Psal. x. 14. *The poor committeth himself unto thee,* Heb. *leaves upon thee.* The sinner sees his case in itself to be desperate, but hearing of the Saviour able to save to the uttermost, and believing his good-will to him, commits and rolls himself on him.

2. He expects salvation from him according to the word of his grace, Acts xv. 11. forecited. For the gospel is a promise held forth to sinners to be believed, a promise of life and salvation, Heb. iv. 1; and faith trusting the promise, expects the accomplishment of it.

And the sinner believing on Christ, betakes himself to him only, wholly, and for ever.

(1.) He renounces utterly all expectations of rest to his conscience from the law, and betakes himself to a crucified Christ for it, Phil. iii. 3. All his doings and sufferings are quitted in point of confidence in them before the Lord; and he lays his weight allenarly on the blood and righteousness of Christ. The infinity of the person persuades him of the efficacy of these for acceptance, and the word of promise satisfies him of Christ's good-will to apply them to him.

(2.) He renounces utterly all expectations of rest to his heart from the world, and his lusts, and betakes himself to a full Christ for it, Jer. xvi. 19. The world has appeared vain and empty, it has given the man many disappointments, and he will trust it no more; he says, There is no hope from that quarter. His sinful lusts have appeared deceitful; looking for a rest in them, he has found himself as among lions' dens, and on mountains of lepords. Wherefore he takes Christ for a rest to his restless heart, for all and instead of all: Psal. lxxiii. 25. "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee."

Thus the sinner believing does enter into rest, rests in Christ as his choice, never to make another choice, to take any person or thing in his stead; rests in him as a complete portion, sensible that there in enough in him to make him happy.

II. I shall consider the entering of those that have believed into rest in Jesus Christ. And herein I shall shew,

1. What is supposed in that those who have believed do enter into rest.

2. What is that rest in Christ which they do enter into.

3. What is the import of their entering into that rest in Christ.

4. How the soul is entered into rest in the way of believing.

FIRST, I am to shew what is supposed in that those who have believed do enter into rest.

First, Those who have not believed, are in a state of restlessness. Unbelievers are restless creatures, Is. lvii. 20. Till the soul come to Christ, it can never get true rest: one may take rest as well on the top of a mast, as get it in an ungodly, unregenerate, unconverted state. Those out of Christ have,

1. A restless station, an insecure standing, Deut. xxviii. 65, 66. "And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the the sole of thy foot have rest: but the Lord shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind. And thy life shall hang in doubt before thee, and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life." It is by faith only that one's feet come to be set on a rock. Sinners out of Christ are like those who are standing on the earth quaking under them, like those who are leaning on a broken reed: for how can they have sure footing, who are lying open to the wrath of God, and are every moment in hazard of dropping into the pit? John iii. *ult.*

2. A restless labouring, Matt. xi. 28. The reigning lusts keep them always busy; for they have many mouths to feed, many taskmasters to please, who are under the command of unmortified lusts, Jer. ix. 5. They have hard work to squeeze their satisfaction out of the husks of the empty creation, Hab. ii. 13. And if conscience is awakened, they have hard labour, in the fiery region of the law, to keep pace with it, and work a righteousness in which they may stand before a just God, Rom. x. 3. It is a restless labouring, for they can never reach the end of their work; for reigning lusts will never cease craving, the creature will never satisfy, nor the law justify.

3. A restless wandering. God is the place, the resting place of the soul, Psal. xc. 1. "Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations." Adam and all his posterity in him left this place; so the soul not returned to God by Christ, is in a wandering state, Prov. xxvii. 8. "As a bird that wandereth from her nest;

4. A restless burden-bearing, Matth. xi. 28. There is a load of guilt on them, which they cannot shake off, John vii. 24—of servitude to reigning lusts, which they cannot free themselves of, 2 Tim. iii. 6.—of law-duties bound on them under the pain of the curse, while it has no promise of strength wherewith to perform them, which they can neither bear nor be freed from, Gal. iv. 24,—26.—of curses, which they are continually increasing, Gal. iii. 10.—and of wrath lying on them, John iii. *ult.* and heaped up, Rom. ii. 5.

5. *Lastly*, A restless eternal state abiding them, 2 Thess. i. 7, 8, 9. They that take not up their rest in Christ now, will have no rest hereafter: for *their worm will never die, nor their fire be quenched.* As they have no solid rest in this world, they will have no rest at all in the other world.

Secondly, Restless souls may be laid to rest in Jesus Christ, Matt. xi. 28. "Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." The whole race of mankind being put off their rest by Adam's fall, whoso will may return to their rest in Christ, by him returning to God. For the rest that men are seeking, but cannot get in their lusts, in the creature, and in the law, may be found in Christ. In him the soul may sweetly repose itself; being safe from the fear of evil, and having all in him to answer its needs.

Lastly, It is by faith the restless soul is laid to rest in Christ, Rom. xv. 13. "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing." The word was put off, and is kept off its rest, by the disturbance given by the tempter: he goes about, and will let none of them rest, that he can get hindered. God has sent us the gospel, as a song to sing poor sinners to rest in a Saviour, Psal. xxxvii. 7; and it is so efficacious for that end, that all that hear it by faith, are really led to rest in him, though they had been raging like madmen, as Manasseh and Paul.

SECONDLY, I proceed to show what is that rest in Christ, which they who do believe enter into. It is twofold, spiritual and heavenly, initial and complete.

First, They who have believed, do enter into spiritual rest, which is their initial or begun rest. Though they should get little more rest for their bodies, till they rest in the grave; they enter into soul-rest, Matth. xi. 39. they get rest for their souls in Christ. And none that knows what soul-trouble is, but they will value it more than any rest out of heaven. And they can enter into,

1. A rest of the understanding. The mind of man is a restless thing; and though it is always seeking and searching, it can never find where to rest, till the soul come to Christ, and there it comes to the utmost point and so rests. Now, the minds of those that have believed, do enter into,

(1.) A rest of persuasion and assurance of the truth of the gospel, 1 Thess. i. 5, "Our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance." There is a root of Atheism and incredulity in the minds of men by nature: the gospel is brought to them, but they cannot believe it, Isa. iii. 1. It is enforced upon them with many clear arguments, ready to cap-

tivate their assent: but still at best they remain fluctuating about it; sometimes they are almost persuaded, and anon the vain mind recoils. Hence they are here and there in their resolutions, course of life, &c. Thus they remain restless in their minds about it, till the Spirit demonstrating it, works faith in them: and then they rest assured of it, as of what they see and feel.

(2.) A rest sufficient to make men happy. The whole blind world is in quest of that, and they are rambling up and down in great confusion seeking it; while they know not where it is. One runs to the profits, others to the pleasures of the world for it; but can never find it in the whole round of creation to which they go for it. But Christ being seen by an eye of faith, the mind is at rest from the weary search: the soul has found the one pearl, and cries out, I have found, I need seek no farther, John i. 45; here is enough for me.

(3.) A rest of the highest estimation, Psal. lxxiii. 25. forecited. Natural men are in a constant hurry this way, they never rest in this point. They will most esteem that to-day, which they will loath and think very little off to-morrow. What we had the highest value for in infancy, we care not for in childhood; in childhood, we despise in youth, &c. In a word, natural men are all their days like children, that value the newest toy most. But when men believe, the highest estimation is fixed on Christ, 1 Pet. ii. 7. *Unto you which believe he is precious:* and though thousands of objects come after him, he preserves his transcendent excellency in the believer's eyes. His mind is at rest there, though the greatest hardships come with him, their highest value for him is not sunk.

2. A rest of the will. The will is a restless faculty of the soul; it goes hither and thither, and can never be brought to rest, till the soul comes to Christ. *Unstable as water*, may be its motto, for what he wills to-day, he will not to-morrow. But the will of those who have believed doth enter into,

(1.) A rest of full liking to and contentedness with Christ, Psal. cx. 3. *Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.* The unbeliever never saw the object in which he could so rest. However pleased he was with it, it wanted still some one thing or other to him: the creature, in itself; and Christ himself, with respect to their mind. Hence he could never find rest to his will. But they who believe do enter into this rest: they have at length fallen on an object that fully pleaseth them; there is nothing in him which they would have away, and there is nothing out of him that they would have in, Cant. v *ult.* *He is altogether lovely.*

(2.) A rest of chief design and purpose, namely, so partake of Christ, and enjoy God in him, which is man's chief end, Psal. lxxiii.

25. Unbelievers are still changing their particular chief designs, they alter their minds in them, and cannot rest: but faith sets the soul to rest in *one thing*, which it will chiefly pursue while breath lasts, Psal. xxvii. 4, and what that is, the apostle tells, Phil. iii. 8, "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ."

(3.) A rest of final choice, Psal. lxxiii. 25. The soul that is out of Christ is light of conceit, and given to changes: but they that have made their choice, and closed their eyes never to chuse another, acquiescing in the choice of Christ for a portion. Hence they deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, as a woman espoused to a husband can no more admit the addresses of former suitors, Tit. ii. 12, 13.

3. A rest of the conscience. A disturbed conscience is a heavy companion, Prov. xviii. 14. and there is no sound rest for it, but in Christ. The consciences of some are asleep, yea those of some are seared; but that is no kindly rest for them. They will certainly be awakened sooner or later, and conscience makes some frightful starts in that sleep. The awakened conscience smarts sore as by a deep wound, Acts ii. 37. and that wound's becoming incurable, is the gnawing worm in hell. The first way men go for rest in this case is to the law, making a healing plaister of their duties to apply to their sore: but there is no rest there, the thunder of its curses being redoubled. But the consciences of those who have believed, do enter into,

(1.) A rest of ease, Rom. xv. 13. The soul that was in a storm before, comes to enjoy a calm by believing, just according to the measure of believing. In the awakened fired conscience, guilt ferments, and casts it into a fever; by believing the soul gets the conscience purged, Heb. ix. 14. and so there is a cool of that fever, chap. x. 2. Faith brings the tossed soul to an anchor in Christ.

(2.) A rest of refreshment, comfort, and establishment: there is not only *peace*, but *joy in believing*, according o the measure thereof, Rom. xv. 13. The same conscience that stung the man before, cheers him now; that brought the dread of God as an enemy, brings in kindly thoughts of God through Christ, finding kindly rest in the righteousness of a Redeemer apprehended by faith.

Indeed so far as faith is mixed without doubting, the rest will be mixed with unquietness. And if faith were perfect, the rest would be perfect too. But if the hand of faith tremble, taking and holding the grip, so much will be wanting of the ease and comfort of conscience.

4. A rest of heart and affections, Psal. cxvi. 7. This is a rest the soul can never find till it come to Christ: for still the heart of man is craving, at the rate the whole creation cannot answer it, and therefore is kept restless. But the hearts of those who have believed, do enter into,

(1.) A rest of satisfaction, Phil. iv. 18. The soul being by faith set on the breasts of the divine consolations, has enough, Gen. xxxiii. 11. It finds Christ an object commensurable to its boundless desires, nothing to be desired without him, nothing beyond him, Psal, lxxiii. 25. The whole compass of wordly comforts could never match the heart; there was still something wanting which the heart desired. But now it is matched in a satisfying object.

(2.) A rest of settled abode, Psal. xc. 1. so that it goes no more abroad, as it was wont, among the creatures for satisfaction, John iv. 14. Having Christ, it has enough within itself, Prov. xiv. 14. and therefore can rest satisfied even when the streams abroad are dried up, Hab. iii. 17, 18. why? because the fountain is with it. Christ, as the husband of the soul, becomes a covering of its eyes.

(3.) A rest of holy calmness, Matth. xi. 29. While the soul is out of Christ, the heart and affections are like a troubled sea: unmortified lusts and passions fight therein like contrary winds blowing; one passion drives the heart this way, anon another comes and drives it that way, Jam. iv. 1. But the soul believing in Christ, the turbulent rout of unruly lusts is cashiered, and the soul gets a cool of that fever, Rom. vi. 14. *Sin shall not have dominion over you.* Then is fulfiled that promise, Isa. xi. 6. *The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid: and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them.*

(4.) A rest of holy security as to the issue of all that concerns them, 2 Tim. i. 12. "I know, (says Paul) whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." Faith brings the news from heaven, on all events, that we will be well in the end. Luther, when any cloud of troubles appeared to be gathering, used to say, "Come let us sing the 46th psalm." For faith can make a rest in the midst of trouble, building its nest in the promise, John xvi. *ult.* "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

And thus the soul ceaseth from its own works, Heb. iv. 10; and hath a spiritual sabbath begun.

Secondly, Those who have believed, do enter into heavenly rest at

length. This is the rest completed. The grave is made a resting place for their bodies for a while; but the soul rests in Abraham's bosom at death till the resurrection. And then the soul and body together will have an everlasting complete rest there together. All I say of it is in these two things.

1. All the mixture of disquiet and uneasiness that remains in the rest of believers here, shall then be taken away. The soul rest in Christ here is not without some mixture of disquiet, because of the imperfection of faith. There is a remaining darkness in their minds, and rebellion in their will: the rest of their conscience in Christ may be assaulted with doubts and fears; and the rest of their hearts in him interrupted by the sallies of corruption. But according to the gospel, God judgeth of them according to the bent of their soul.

2. The rest begun here shall be screwed up to a height there. Their minds being enlightened with the light of glory, their wills perfected in holiness, their consciences quieted by the decisive sentence from the tribunal, and their hearts satisfied with full enjoyment, will give them a more profound rest in Christ than we can imagine.

THIRDLY, I proceed to shew what is the import of their entering into that rest in Christ. It imports,

1. Sinners before they believe have a toiled, restless, uneasy life of it, Matth. xi. 28. No wonder, for they are God's enemies, the law's criminals, sin's slaves, and Satan's drudges. In vain do men reject religion, because it will not suffer them to be idle: for the servants of sin are as busy as the servants of God can be for their hearts. The watch goes as fast when wrong, as when right: and the Lord does not put more, but other work in people's hands. The soul of man is always doing and active, right and wrong.

2. All that believe are wearied, outwearied people, that find they need rest, and would fain have it, Isa. xxviii. 12. *This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest, and this is the refreshing.* Never a soul will come to Christ, till it be so wearied, that its legs are able to carry it no further, Jer. ii. 24. So being quite tired out, it lies down at his door. They are outwearied of the vain world; it has disappointed them so often, that they say, *There is no hope.* They are outwearied of their deceitful lusts, for they find there is no satisfying of them. They see there is no rest for them there. If ye were never thus wearied, ye have never yet entered into this rest.

3. They see and believe there is a rest in Christ for them. The gospel is *a word in season to the weary*, Isa. l. 4. there it is they *find rest to their souls*, Matth. xi. 28. They see Christ *as the shadow of a*

great rock in the weary land, and conclude, that if they can get there, they will get rest. It is the Spirit of God that discovers Christ as a resting-place for the sinner; for the soul remaining in its natural blindness, is so far from it, that it represents Christ in quite contrary colours.

4. They come to him as a resting-place, by believing on him, Matth. xi. 28; Isa. xi. 10. They throw themselves into the arms of his grace, take hold of his covenant, and receive him for their eternal resting-place, to abide in him for ever, desiring nothing without or beyond him, Psal. lxxiii. 25. as having all in him for their safety and provision, Psal. cxlii. 5. So the weary soul takes up its lodging in Christ, saying, All my wants be on thee.

5. They compose themselves for, and set themselves to rest in him, Psal. cxvi. 7. They seek their rest in him, as a wearied man gone to bed seeks rest there. They give over seeking rest, either to their consciences in the law, or to their hearts in the world, or their wills in their lusts: but what they were seeking before in all these, they seek now in Christ alone, Psal. xlv. 10.

6. They are active to get rest in Christ. Entering speaks activity, and that lies in the exercise of faith. They who have believed, do by believing enter into rest: by the first act of faith the soul is brought into the resting place, by the continued actings of faith the soul enters into rest in him. So faith is called *a resting on the Lord*, 2 Chron. xiv. 11. *in the Lord*, Psal. xxxvii. 7. And as far as the exercise of faith is intermitted, so far the entering into rest in Christ is interrupted.

7. They find a begun rest, but not complete; they are entered into it; though they are not yet come to the perfection of it, yet they are in the way to it. Such is the difference betwixt the rest of faith, and the rest of sight and sense. Hence they are easily disturbed, too easily put off their rest by temptations and trials; whereas in heaven they can be no more disturbed in the least.

8. *Lastly*, The believer all his life long here, is but entering into that rest: *We do enter*. The Israelites were forty years a-entering into Canaan, after they came out of Egypt. And from the moment of the first believing, till the soul comes to glory, it is but entering into rest; entering being but an initial and imperfect action. Hence they that have come to Christ, are still said to be *coming*, 1 Pet. ii. 4. But at length they shall have it full and complete.

Fourthly, I come now to shew how the soul is entered into rest in the way of believing, or the influence of faith to bring and lay the soul to rest. This is a mystery to the blind world: no body can truly know the rest of the soul in Christ, but those that have expe-

rienced it; nor the influence of faith that way, but those that have felt it; though they may talk rationally about it, and preach it.

1. Faith discovers Christ as the only object commensurable to the desires of the soul, Psal. lxxiii. 25. Men employ the eyes in their head to discover among the creatures something they may rest in; the eyes of their mind, and these go to what they never saw, and dress up a thousand airy nothings to themselves: but all these leave the man disappointed, so that he must go on to a new search, and so can never rest. But the eye of faith beholds through the glass of the gospel Christ as such an object, a full and complete match for the heart; so that the man sees he needs seek no farther, and so he rests.

2. Faith takes possession of Christ, as such an object offered to the soul; knits with him in a marriage-covenant, by trusting on him for all to itself, John i. 12; Psal. ii. *ult.* So it enters the soul to rest, as a wife in the house of her husband, who has now made her final choice. The man that was seeking goodly pearls, having discovered the one pearl, purchases that, and seeks no more, Matth. xii. 45, 46. A beggar may see an estate, which, if he had it, would be enough for him; but that sight cannot cause him to give over his begging: but if one should make it over to him, and he thereupon takes possession, he will rest, and beg no more.

3. Faith draws the sting of guilt out of the conscience, and so enters the soul to rest, Rom. iii. 24, 25. Lay a man down in the softest bed, the quietest room, a thorn sticking in his finger, he cannot rest till the thorn be pulled out. Guilt is a thorn in the conscience; but faith applying the blood of Christ to the wound, the thorn is drawn out, Heb. ix. 14. It cast him in a spiritual fever, but he is healed, Isa. xxxiii. *ult.*

4. Faith sets the soul in safety, Prov. i. *ult.* If a man have never so many conveniencies for resting, but sees himself still in danger of his life, how can he rest? Job xi. 18. In such danger are all unbelievers, and they can have no rest, but when the dead sleep is in their eye. But as soon as the soul believes, all is safe, Rom. viii. 1. Faith brings the soul under the covert of blood, where not a drop of wrath can pass; and within the bond of the covenant of peace, where the noise of war is heard no more. Pardon and peace give safety for quiet rest.

5. Faith mortifies and breaks the power of reigning lusts, Acts xv. 9. While they abide in their force, there can be no rest, more than in the troubled sea: but faith brings a calm, mortifying those lusts, that fight in and against the soul. Faith knitting the soul to Christ as the head, in whom is lodged the fulness of the Spirit of

holiness, cannot miss of sanctifying influence, Acts xxvi. 18. And the more vigorous and strong faith is, the virtue of the death of Christ for the death of lusts is the more partaken of. Hence it brings the soul to rest, freeing it from the hellish noise that unmortified lusts were wont to make; and from the violent tosses that they gave the soul among them, so that it could not rest.

6. Faith cures the soul of the dog-like appetite, that painful hunger and thirst which the eating of the forbidden fruit left in all mankind. Lay one never so soft, if hunger be gnawing him, and thirst scorching him, he cannot rest. Such is the case of all unbelievers, they are hungering and thirsting for satisfaction from the creature: they eat of the husks, but they are never satisfied; they drink of the puddled waters, but their thirst is not quenched. Hence Christ calls them to him, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat, yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness," Isa. lv. 1, 2. And faith taking of the hidden manna, the waters of life, that hunger and thirst is cured, John iv. 14. and the soul rests.

7. Faith contracts the desires of the soul into one point, Psal. xxvii. 4. "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire into his temple." The unbeliever's heart is divided, nay it is split in a thousand pieces as it were; for many are the cravings of the heart naturally: but the thing necessary for the soul is but one, Luke x. *ult. One thing is needful.* He that lies down wanting many things to make him easy, how can he rest when his mind is going out on one want after another? Faith makes the desires to be contracted into this one, that the soul may rest in Christ.

8. Faith sees it hath a fulness in Christ enough to answer all its needs: and hence the language thereof is, *I have all, and abound*, Phil. iv. 18. Pressing wants which one knows not of supply for, breed anxiety, and anxiety disturbs and keeps from rest: but faith discerning a full supply for the man in Christ, lays him to rest. There is *the fulness of a Godhead in him*, and so they are *complete in him*, Col. ii. 9, 10. Though a man have nothing in hand to answer the demands of his creditors, if he has bills and bonds of a friend of his, to whom he can never come wrong, he is easy: so the soul, whatever its wants be, knowing it has enough in Christ, rests satisfied that they shall be all supplied out of his exuberant fulness.

9. *Lastly*, Faith leaves all on Christ, Psal. x. 14. *The poor leaveth himself on thee*, Heb. Hannah was very restless a while, but praying in faith, and leaving her case to the Lord, she was easy, 1 Sam. i. 18. Believers are travelling through the wilderness, but they have a guide whom they can trust, and that makes them easy, Phil. iv. 6, 7. The beliver sometimes racks and distresses himself, upon this and the other strait and difficulty; and many unbelieving hows and whys go through his heart; and he is like a man that in a dark and pathless wilderness has lost sight of his guide: but when the eye of faith clears, all these are silenced; and fixing on a promise, he gets a cool of that fever: he trusts on the power, wisdom, and truth of Christ.

I shall now, in the last place, apply this subject in some practical uses.

Use I. Of information. Hence learn,

I. That Jesus Christ is a resting-place for the weary, Matt. xi. 28. By faith the soul comes to him, and there finds a rest. What rest Noah found in the ark, when the deluge was on the earth; the man-slayer in the city of refuge, otherwise in hazard of his life; the Israelites in Canaan after their bondage in Egypt; that Jesus Christ will give to believers in him, Isa. xi. 10. *To it shall the Gentiles seek, and his rest shall be glorious.*

2. True faith is an active and efficacious thing. It lays the restless soul to rest. It is efficacious on the conscience, and heart, and all the faculties of the soul; and therefore cannot but be so on the life too, Gal. v. 6. *Faith worketh by love.* That faith which is idle and inefficacious, making no change on the heart and life, is but dead, and will leave the soul in death, Jam. ii. 17. True faith uniting the soul to Christ the fountain of life, partakes of the Spirit of life in him, and so is a working faith.

3. The way of believing is the way to solid rest. All weary souls should take this way, so should they attain the rest they would fain have. This is the way to the wilderness rest, where the soul rests in Christ amidst all the present tosses of a present life, John xvi. *ult.* and to the heavenly rest, where they shall have a profound peace not to be disturbed any more, Rev. xxi. 25.

4. Those who have believed, may see what course to take at any time when their rest is disturbed. They must renew the actings of faith on Christ. This is a sovereign remedy, (1.) When their inward peace of conscience is marred, through a sense of unpardoned guilt lying on them. The same faith that applying the blood of Christ to the soul, drew the sting out of the conscience before, will do the same again. (2.) When corruption stirring and prevailing in the soul, disturbs its rest. Nothing is more effectual to quench the hellish

fire blown up in the heart, than the exercise of faith, Acts xv. 9. And at no time is the exercise of faith out of season, Psal. lxii. 8. *Trust in him at all times*, particularly at such a time, saying with David, Psal. lxv. 3. *Iniquities prevail against me: as for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away.* (3.) When one is under a pressure of outward trouble, faith will carry the soul to a hiding-place, Isa. xxxii. 2. and relieving the soul by the comfort of the promise, will make it go easily under the burden.

USE II. Of trial. Hereby ye may try whether ye have truly believed in Christ or not; for they who have believed do enter into rest in him. And by this touch-stone we may sort the hearers of the gospel.

1. Those who have never yet found the object, in which their heart could take up its eternal rest, but are still seeking it among the creatures, are unbelievers. That is an evidence they are in their natural state, still wandering on the mountains of vanity, and Christ has never been discovered savingly to them, John iv. 10.

On the other hand, those who have seen such a transcendent glory and excellency in Christ, as has put an end to their searching out for a satisfying object, and brought them to make a final choice of Christ as fully satisfying, they are true believers. For they are come to a point in the main thing, Psal. lxxiii. 25.; they have found the one pearl, else they had not given over their former vain search.

2. Those whose pretended closing with Christ has never made them cease from their own works, but they are still living the loose, licentious, carnal life they led before, are unbelievers, Heb. iv. 10. They who continue in the devil's drudgery, yielding still their members instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, are not entering into this holy rest, but abiding at their restless labour.

But such as having closed with Christ have given over their former work, dying unto sin, and living to God as those that are alive from the dead, are true believers. Their faith is proved true, as being a fountain of sanctification. Their lives are actually purged from the gross pollutions of the world, whereby they differ from the profane; and they are wrestling against the pollutions of the heart whereby they differ from hypocrites, 1 John iii. 3. Psal. xxiv. 3, 4.

3. Those who fall away from Christ in heart or life, have not truly believed, 1 John ii. 19. There are branches in Christ that rest not in him, but are taken away, because they never truly knit with him, John xv. 2. (1.) There is a falling away from Christ in heart: that is, when those who have pretended to yield themselves to the Lord, keep up their profession, and a form of duties, to satisfy their consciences: but in the mean time it is the vain world and their de-

ceitful lusts whence they fetch all their satisfaction to their hearts, like those, Isa. iv. 1. who said, *We will eat our bread, and wear our own apparel: only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach.* (2.) In life and conversation, which readily follows the other, so that they return by degrees to their former sinful courses; turning as loose and licentious as ever, if not more so. Of these it is said, that *it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them,* &c. 2 Pet. ii. 21, 22.

But those who continue with Christ in heart and life, are true believers, John viii. 31. "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed." Such a continuance argues them to have knit with the flock; the storms blow, but they are founded on the rock, therefore they stand. Their continuance with him shews, they have entered into rest with him.

Case. But alas! my heart continues very restless, and ill to guide; it is unstable as water, I cannot get it to rest in Christ as I would have it. *Ans.* What of that rest is obtained here is an entering into it, a beginning of it, and endeavour after it, rather than a full rest. The Christian is in that case rather like one that is going to sleep, that has his startings now and then, than like one who is sound asleep. Though he cannot rest as he would desire in Christ, yet still he abides within the resting-place, does not turn his back on Christ, and take up his rest in the world and his lusts again; like a sick man who may change many seats, yet still abides within his own house, and goes not abroad leaving it. So the Christian is habitually, and in respect of endeavour, resting in Christ: and the Lord will reckon that a true rest in him, 2 Cor. viii. 12. "For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not." Psal. xxvii. 4. "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life." No body while here wants their wandering fits: but happy they who are like the dove sent out of the ark, ever restless till she came back; not like the raven, who finding no carrion to feed on, returned no more.

USE III. Of exhortation. Ye who profess to have believed in Christ, rest in him, and so evidence your faith. For motives, consider,

1. There is no need ye should go to any other quarter for what ye need: *For it pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell,* Col. 1. 19. There is nothing ye can want, but ye have it in him; *Thou art my refuge,* says David, *and my portion in the land of the liv-*

ing, Psal. cxlii. 5. There is no case ye can be in, but there is a suitable remedy for it in him. He that rests in Christ, having Christ in him, has all within himself.

2. There is no true rest to be found out of Christ, John vi. 67, 68. He is the life, and without him there is nothing but death; he is all in all, and without him there is nothing but emptiness; he is the rest, and without him there is nothing but wandering.

3. It dishonours him highly not to rest in him. It gives out an ill report of him to the world, whereby his name may be blasphemed, as if there were not enough in him to satisfy in all cases. It is such an indignity as it would be to a husband, that his spouse were hanging about the doors of her former suitors.

4. Your not resting in him will evidence your hypocrisy: *Will he delight himself in the Almighty?* says Job of the hypocrite; *Will he always call upon God?* Job xxvii. 10. Ye will be apostates and backsliders, whose latter end will be worse than the beginning; for the unclean spirit returning comes with seven devils worse than himself.

5. *Lastly*, Rest in him now, and ye shall rest with him for ever: but if ye forsake him, he will cast you off, and ye will fall there where there is no rest for the ages of eternity. And it will aggravate your condemnation, that ye might have been well, if ye could but have rested in Christ.

A VIEW

OF

THIS AND THE OTHER WORLD;

WITH THE

STATE OF SAINTS AND SINNERS IN BOTH, CONTRASTED.

PARTICULARLY DESCRIBING THE

SOLEMN ENTRANCE WHICH THE SOUL MAKES

INTO

THE OTHER WORLD AT DEATH.

IN SEVERAL PRACTICAL DISCOURSES.

THE

STATE AND CHARACTER OF BELIEVERS,

AS

THEY ARE OF GOD, WITH THEIR KNOWLEDGE THEREOF, ILLUSTRATED; AND A DESCRIPTION OF THE UNREGENERATE WORLD LYING IN WICKEDNESS.

Several sermons preached at Ettrick, in the end of the year 1728, and beginning of 1729.

---

1 JOHN v. 19.

And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.

As it was said to Rebekah, Gen. xxv. 23. *Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels—and the elder shall serve the younger;* so it may be said in the text. Two manner of people are here, to one of which all of us do belong, viz. those that are of God, and those that are of the world. The latter is the elder, and shall serve the younger, Psal. xlix. 14. *The upright shall have dominion over them in the morning.*

1. There is a people, that though they are *in* the world, are not *of* it, but separated from it: *And we know that we are of God.* Here consider, (1.) The original of that people: They are *of God;* that is, begotten and born of God, regenerate persons, born again. They are a heavenly people in respect of their extract, *born from above,* 2 Pet. i. 4. (2.) Who they are in particular, *We* are they, *we* believers in Christ. Those that having received the call of the gospel to come out of the world lying in wickedness, have by faith embraced the call and come away, John i. 12, 13. 2 Cor. v. 17. (3.) The knowledge they have of their original: *We know that we are of God.* We are not only regenerate, but we *know* that we are so. Not that all of them know so much, but some of them do: there may be children so young, that they know not their father's and mother's names; but the elder children know them very well. This comes in here for the comfort of believers against the sin unto death, ver. 16. which the regenerate cannot fall into, ver. 18.

2. There is another people, who are *not of God,* but are quite

distinct from those that are so. Here consider, (1.) Who they are, *the world*, that is, the unregenerate; these are the people distinct from, yea, in an opposite interest to, the people of God. It is plain, *the world* is taken here, not for the place, but for the men of the place, and these not the strangers and pilgrims in it, but the natives who have no other but a worldly birth, and who are in it as at home in their own country. The phrase is taken from the Old Testament, where the church is called *the sons of God*, Gen. vi. 4. those without the church, *the earth*, Gen. xi. 1. in opposition to heaven; being the earthly men in opposition to the heavenly men; men whose birth, temper, and manner of life are all worldly. (2.) The character of this people: they are *lying in wickedness*, or *in the wicked one*, viz. the devil. They are lying in sin, in the guilt and filth, and under the reigning power of it, and so under the power of the devil. They are not rising and wrestling out of it, but they are lying in it, sleeping, dead, and buried in it. (3.) The extent of this character; it belongs to them all, *the whole world*. There are many differences among those of the unregenerate world; some of them are professors, some profane, but the former as well as the latter are lying in wickedness.

That I may give you some view of this text, in its different branches, I shall essay to open up the three following points of doctrine therefrom, viz.

Doct. I. All true believers are of God, and so separated from the world lying in wickedness.

Doct. II. People's being of God, and separated from the world lying in wickedness, is what may be known by themselves.

Doct. III. The whole unregenerate world lieth in wickedness.

Doct. I. All true believers are of God, and so separated from the world lying in wickedness.

In handling this point, I shall shew,

I. How true believers are of God.

II. How, as they are of God, regenerate persons, they are separated from the world lying in wickedness.

III. Make improvement.

I. I am to shew how true believers are of God. One is said to be of God two ways:

1. By creation; and so all things are *of God*, Rom. xi. 36. Thus the devils themselves are of God as their Creator, and so is the *world*. But this is not the being *of God* here meant. They may be God's creatures, who nevertheless are the children of the devil.

2. By generation, as a son is of a father. And this is twofold.

1*st*, Eternal generation: so Christ alone is *of God*, John vi. 46. Psal. ii. 7. He is the Son of God by generation of the person of the Father, having the same numerical divine essence eternally and necessarily communicated to him from the Father. Hence he is self-existent, independent, and equal with the Father, John v. 26. Phil. ii. 6. Neither is this meant here.

2*dly*, Temporal generation, called *regeneration*, which is a work of God's grace on the souls of men, resembling natural generation. And thus believers, and none else, are *of God*, John i. 12, 13. and viii. 47. We are all born from below naturally; but we must be born from above spiritually, if we see heaven, John iii. 3. *Except a man be born again* [marg. *from above*] *he cannot see the kingdom of God.* All the elect are born so, sooner or later. They naturally lie in the foul womb of the world with others, but the power of divine grace separates them therefrom.

The work of regeneration is held forth under a double notion, shewing the regenerate to be *of God.*

(1.) It is a being *begotten of God*, 1 John v. 18. *He that is begotten of God, keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.* God himself is the Father of the new creature: it is of no lower original. The incorruptible word of the gospel is the seed of it, Jam. i. 18. 1 Pet. i. 23, 25. A word is cast into the heart, which by the efficacy of the Spirit changes one into a new nature. It is done by means of the resurrection of Christ, ver. 3. Christ lay in this womb of the earth in the grave, as a public person having satisfied justice, he was raised, came forth of the grave, as the first-born from the dead; and in virtue thereof the dead elect are raised out of their grave of sin, as the next born from the dead.

And this notion of regeneration speaks the parties themselves to have no hand in it, more than a child hath in its own generation. So that as regenerate, they are wholly of God; and owe their being in grace to him purely, not to their own free will.

(2.) It is a being *born of God*, 1 John v. 18. *Whosoever is born of God sinneth not.* By his Spirit alone the new creature is formed in all its parts, and brought forth into the new world of grace, John iii. 5. And this notion of it speaks the parties to receive life by the Spirit, and to be brought forth to act that life; and none other but the Spirit to be the cause thereof, John i. 13.

Now by this means, *viz.* regeneration, believers are of God.

1. As partaking of the divine nature, as the child doth of the nature of the parent, 2 Pet. i. 4. There is a fulness of grace lodged in the man Christ, out of which they receive grace for grace, and so

with him partake of the divine nature, being made one spirit, or of one spiritual and divine nature with him. Even as they received a corrupt nature derived to them from Adam, by which they were originally of the wicked one.

2. As bearing the image of God, in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness. By regeneration they are like him; and if it were perfect, they would be perfectly like him. For in regeneration Christ is formed in them, Gal. iv. 19. that is, they are the image of the man Christ, who is the image of the invisible God.

3. As being of his family, Eph. iii. 14, 15. and that not as servants only, but as children, 2 Cor. vi. 17, 18. The new birth is a high birth; by it the sinner is a member of the family of heaven; God is his Father, Christ is his elder brother, and the angels and saints are his brethren.

4. As owing their new being to him only in the efficacy of his grace, Eph. ii. 10. *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works.* Our natural being we owe in part to our parents, Heb. xii. 9. but our gracious being to God only. That we are men, we owe it to him, in the efficacy of his creating power; and that we are saints, we owe it to him, in the efficacy of his quickening and renewing grace, Gal. iv. 28. *Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.*

II. I shall shew how believers, as they are of God, regenerate persons, are separated from the world lying in wickedness. Negatively,

1. Not in respect of place, 1 Cor. v. 9, 10. They are still *in* the world, and must be till the Lord call them home; though they are not of the world. God could, in the moment of conversion, have transported converts into heaven, taken them out of the world for good and all; but he has seen meet for their trial, and the glory of the power of his grace, to keep them in the world a while; and yet to keep them separate from it.

2. Not in respect of gathering them into pure unmixed societies for worship. There are no such visible church-societies in the world, Matth. xiii. 28—30. Separating from the world lying in wickedness is not such an easy thing, as visible church separating; they may be forward enough to that, who are yet with the world lying in wickedness, Jude, 19. and may go from party to party in the visible church, who are still of the world's party, not of God. But positively, the regenerate as such are separated from the world.

1. In respect of their being broken off from that corrupt mass, and become a part of a new lump. Adam falling left all mankind earthly men, bearing his corrupt image; Christ is become a second

Adam, the head of heavenly men, bearing his image, 1 Cor. xv. 47, 48. Now the regenerate are separated from the former society, and become members of the latter, through regenerating grace. They are become members of Christ's mystical body, of the invisible church, a distinct though invisible society.

2. Their being delivered from under the power of the god of this world, *viz.* Satan, Acts xxvi. 18. Satan is the god of this world; the wicked are led by him at his will; he works effectually in them, and blinds their minds, 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4. But the regenerate are got out from under his subjection, delivered from his kingdom, Col. i. 13. He is indeed an enemy to molest them, but not their king that reigns over them; his involuntary prisoners they may be for a time, but they are no more his willing subjects.

3. Their having a Spirit, even the Spirit of God dwelling in them, which the world have not, Rom. viii. 9; Jude, 19. When Lazarus's spirit entered again into his body, he was separated from the congregation of the dead; and when a dead sinner gets the Spirit of Christ breathed into him, he is separated from the world, as much as the living from the dead.

4. *Lastly*, Their having a disposition, frame, bent, and cast of heart and soul, opposite to that of the world; so that they are as much separated from the world, as enemies are one from another, Gen. iii. 15. Hence they are in their great designs, affections, course and manner of life, non-conformists, and opposites to the world: as opposite as Caleb and Joshua were to their unbelieving countrymen, Numb. xiv. 24.

From this doctrine, we may learn the following things.

1. This speaks the dignity of believers. They are the truly honourable ones, as being of God; they are the excellent of the earth. What avails it that men can boast of their honourable extract in the world, while it still remains true, that they are of their father the devil? The beggar on the dunghill being of God, is more honourable than the wicked king sitting on his throne, attended with all the majesty of a kingdom.

2. It speaks the privilege of believers. Every one will care and provide for his own: be sure God will then take special concern about believers, Matth. vi. 31, 32. *Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or what shall we drink? or wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.* But many such, ye may say, are sorrily provided for. *Ans.* Ye are too hasty in such a judgment, Heb. xi. 16. *God is not ashamed to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a city.* Every one will protect

his own too; God will then protect believers, and he will avenge all their quarrels. There is never an unkindness done to them, but he will resent it, as ye will see from Christ's procedure with the wicked at the last day, Matth. xxv. There is not a hard word spoken to them, nor a wrong look given them, but he will cause their enemies to pay for it.

3. It speaks the duty of believers. Carry yourselves as becomes your dignity and privilege, as those that are of God. Trust him with all your concerns, in all your straits; walk tenderly before him, remembering that your follies reflect dishonour on him ye belong to; and that ye are to evidence your being of God, by your steering another course than the world lying in wickedness.

4. *Lastly*, It shews the self deceit of unbelievers, pretenders to a saving interest in God, while in the mean time they are lying together with the world in wickedness. How can they be of God, who are not separated from the world, but walking according to the course thereof, in the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.

But I proceed to the second doctrine from the text.

Doct. II. *People's being of God, and separated from the world lying in wickedness, is what may be known by themselves. We know that we are of God*, says the apostle. There is a people *in* the world, yet not *of* the world, but separated from it; and they may see that they are such.

In treating this subject, I shall shew,

I. What knowledge may be had of this.

II. Make some practical improvement.

I. I am to shew what knowledge may be had of this, That one is of God, and separated from the world lying in wickedness.

There are three ways of coming to the knowledge of a thing.

1. By our senses, as we know fire to be hot, and ice to be cold. But this matter cannot be known that way. The grace of God, and the spiritual privileges of believers, are not the objects of sense. Indeed, if separation from the world were just a separating from one party and joining with another in church-society; we might know it by sense; but it is not so.

2. By extraordinary revelation, visions, voices, or impressions. Such things have been, as in Abraham's case, Gen. xvii. 1, 2. But that dispensation is ceased, the canon of the scripture being completed, and we referred to it, as unto *a more sure word of prophecy*, 2 Pet. i. 19. It was never known to all, though all are required to

know this, ver. 10. Assurance then of one's being in a state of grace, may be attained without extraordinary revelation.

3. By rational evidence, as seeing a house, we know it has been built by some one; seeing the world, we know that it has been created of God; because they could not make themselves. So men may know themselves to be of God, by *giving diligence to make their calling and election sure*, 2 Pet. i. 10. Two things concur here.

1*st*, Spiritual discerning, a spiritual sight, taste, or feeling of the things of God, in ourselves or others, 1 Cor. ii. 14. It is the total want of this in some, that makes them deceive themselves; they have no spiritual discerning, to distinguish between God's people and the world; so they are like men in the dark, that know not where they are, nor whither they are going. And the weakness of this discerning in many of God's people, robs them of the comfort they might have.

2*dly*, Spiritual reasoning on scripture grounds, 1 John v. 13. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God. The word is the rule, which pronounces of men's state in the general; by spiritual discerning believers see in themselves or others, those things concerning which the scripture pronounces; and by spiritual reasoning they come to know by these means that they are of God, and separated from the world lying in wickedness. Now, by way of rational evidence, one may know this of a two-fold object.

1. Of others. One may know that others are of God, and separated from the world, discerning the image of God shining forth in them, and hence gathering that they are of God, and not of the world. So the apostle in the text speaks of others as well as himself. There is a spiritual discerning in that case, as Barnabas saw the grace of God in the converts at Antioch, Acts xi. 23. And this knowledge is supposed in the command of loving one another, given to God's people; for how can men love others as of God, if they cannot know them to be so?

2. Of themselves. A true believer may know himself to belong to God, and not to the world. So the apostle says in the text, We know that we are of God. There are such marks of distinction betwixt the two societies fixed in the word, that, by spiritual discerning and reasoning, one that is of God may be satisfied, that he is really of God, and needs not be always in the dark in that point.

But betwixt that knowledge concerning one's self and others, there is this remarkable difference.

1*st*, In the case of others, we can have, by rational evidence, only

a judgment of charity, not of certainty, without extraordinary revelation, such as Ananias had with respect to Paul, Acts ix. 15. This is founded upon probable appearance of the grace of God in them, which yet may be but an appearance. Hence the best of men may be deceived in their opinion of others, as Philip was with Simon Magus. The devil's goats may be taken for Christ's sheep, by very discerning Christians. Of this I would say,

(1.) We should not be rash in giving or refusing that judgment, but hold pace with the appearance or non-appearance of the grace of God in them. We are bid to beware of men; for we are told all men are liars: and many a fair outside there is, where there is a foul inside, that a little trial discovers; therefore we ought not to have the persons of any in admiration. On the other side, the grace of God may dwell with much dross; therefore we are to beware lest we trample the jewel under foot, because it lies in a dunghill.

(2.) The love bestowed on hypocrites is not all lost, and therefore it is safest erring on the charitable side. A man may love Christ in a hypocrite; not that Christ dwells in any such, but that what we bestow on any for Christ's sake, whether they really deserve it or not, will not lose its reward, Mark ix. 41. And by the rule of charity, we are obliged to put the best construction on our neighbour's state and way that they can reasonably bear, 1 Cor. xiii. 7. One had better judge ten hypocrites sincere, for that may be duty, than one sincere person a hypocrite.

(3.) Let us carry our judgment of others no farther than that of charity, and not pretend to a certainty, which is not competent to us in that case, but to God only. He alone is the searcher of hearts, without the knowledge of which an absolute certainty cannot be attained. Keeping within our own bounds, the deceit discovered in the world would brangle us the less, as being not inconsistent with the judgment that we formed.

2*dly*, In our own case, we may have by rational evidence a judgment of certainty, without extraordinary revelation. We may in an ordinary way, if we really belong to God, be infallibly assured of it. The reason of the difference is plain; we see the open actions and carriages of others, but we cannot know the secret springs of them, the principles, ends, and manner of them, upon which the main stress lies; but we may know these things in ourselves. What moves ourselves so to walk, we can assuredly know; but what moves others, we cannot know that.

This is clear from the following grounds.

(1.) A true child of God may assuredly know his relative state in the favour of God. Though he cannot open the sealed books of the

decrees, and read his name at first hand in the decree of election; yet by comparing the word of God in the Bible, and the work of God in his own soul; he may know himself to be one of the elect, 2 Pet. i. 10. Heb. vi. 11. to be one of those for whom Christ died, and of the family of God, Rom. viii. 16, 17.

(2.) He may discern in himself real grace, and know that he believes in Christ, as sure as he breathes, 2 Tim. i. 12. and loves him, so that he can appeal to Omniscience for the truth thereof, as Peter did, John xxi. 15. And knowing that all who believe in Christ, and love the Lord, are of God, separated from the world, and shall never be suffered to mix with them again, he may conclude so of himself with the greatest certainty.

(3.) All the saints have the Spirit of Christ, Rom. viii. 9. And it is the office of the Spirit to lead them into all truth, and particularly to shine upon his own work in the soul, 1 Cor. ii. 12; and so to be a joint witness with their own spirits to their adoption into the family of God, Rom. viii. 16; to be a seal, which is designed to ensure, Eph. iv. 30; and an earnest too, which is both a part of the price, and a pledge of the whole, 2 Cor. v. 5.

(4.) The effects of faith sometimes produced by it in the saints confirm this. Such is the boldness and confidence they sometimes have with God, Eph. iii. 12. rejoicing in hope of the glory of God, Rom. v. 2. which is sometimes unspeakable, 1 Pet. i. 8. So that they can cheerfully undergo sufferings, Heb. x. 34. All which necessarily presupposeth their knowing themselves to be of God.

(5.) *Lastly*, The examples of the saints make it plain, as Job xix. 25—27. "For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. And though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God; whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me." Psal. xxiii. ult. "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever." 2 Tim. iv. 8. "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous judge shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." This knowledge is what has been reached, and therefore yet may be so.

II. For practical improvement of this point, I exhort you to be concerned to know, whether ye are of God, separated from the world, or not. Take that matter under serious consideration. To press you thereto, consider,

1. We are all of us naturally, and by our first birth, of the world lying in wickedness, Eph. ii. 2, 3. No question but we were once

joined to the wicked world, as kindly members thereof; all the question is, Whether we be separated from them, or not? It is by a second birth that we are of God, if at all. What experience have we of that?

2. The world lying in wickedness is the society appointed to destruction, as in a state and course of enmity against God, Eph. ii. 3. Therefore all that are to be saved, are delivered and gathered out of it, Gal. i. 4. Wo to them that are left in it, for they will perish in the ruins of it. David prays, "Gather not my soul with the wicked." But they that are not gathered out of them in life, cannot miss to be gathered with them in death; being eternally left in the guilt and filth of their wickedness, where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

3. Many deceive themselves in this matter, as the foolish virgins, Matth. xxv. Christ's flock is certainly a little flock, Luke xii. 32. Matth. v. 13, 14. Yet there are but very few who do not hope to share with them; for a ruining principle obtains, That if we be not notoriously profane, it will be well with us in the end; as if the devil could dwell in none, whose name is not Legion. They that have a form of religion, build on that; and others build on the mercy of God. They consider not, how very unlikely it is, that they shall leap out of Delilah's lap into Abraham's bosom; and therefore they trouble not themselves with separating from the world lying in wickedness.

4. Death is approaching; and if it were come, there will be no separating more from the world. There are two parts of that world, the one within, the other without the line of mercy. The latter lies on the other side of death. And death separates the unregenerate from the former part indeed, but it fixes them for ever among the other part that is quite hopeless.

5. It is uncertain when death comes to us, and how, Matth. xxiv. 42. People of all ages and sizes die, and death fixes all in an unalterable state. A death-bed is not to be trusted to; for death may surprise you without getting one; and though ye get it, it may be very useless for soul business, whether through raving or extreme tossing. At best it is hardly the fit time of being new born, when a-dying.

6. *Lastly*, It is an excellent and useful thing to know our state in this point. For if we find that we are not of God, but of the world, we are awakened to see to it in time. If we find that we are, it is what makes both a comfortable life, in the midst of troubles from the world; and a fruitful life, inflaming the heart with love, humbling the soul, and strengthening it, and fitting both to live and to die.

For your help in this inquiry, consider the following signs, marks, and characters of those that are of God, separated from the world.

CHARACTERS OF THOSE THAT ARE OF GOD.

First, They are such as have fled from the world to Jesus Christ as a refuge, Heb. vi. 18. They have seen danger in it, in a work of conviction; and safety from it in Christ, in a work of saving illumination. Such are of God, and none other, as is manifested from that gospel-call, 2 Cor. vi. 17, 18, "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." The secure, and strangers to Christ, are yet in the world lying in wickedness.

1. Seen danger in the world has made them flee from it. They have come out of it, as Lot out of Sodom, under conviction that destruction from the Lord was waiting it. They have heard and believed the report of the word about it, saying, as Rev. xviii. 4. "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." They have got an awakening that has frightened them from staying longer with them, notwithstanding of the multitude abiding at ease therein, the discerning of which makes many easy in their stay in it.

2. Seen safety in Christ has brought them to him, in a way of believing, Acts xv. 11, "But we believe that through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved." They have seen him to be the Christ, in whom the fulness of happiness is lodged in opposition to the world, 1 John v. 1. They have discovered in him a glory darkening all the world's glory, and so have made the exchange as of husks for bread, Matth. xiii. 45, 46.

Secondly, They are coming away with Christ from the world in their daily walk, answering his call, Can. iv. 8. "Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from Lebanon." After Israel came out of Egypt, they went not back to it, to the brick kilns, and the flesh-pots; but they marched through the wilderness. Those that are separated from the world in regeneration, are still separating from it, in progressive sanctification, labouring to keep themselves unspotted from the world. They are not of God then, who having once had something like conversion, make that stand for all, and never endeavour to be separating more and more from the world.

There are three things that make them still to be coming away from the world.

1. It grows no better in their eyes, in any of its shapes, whatever it grows worse; so they continue their separation and march, coming

up from the wilderness, Cant. viii. 5. Some people get a fright of the world some time; and the ways of the world appear to them dangerous ways. But that fright goes off, and the ways of the world look more gay to them; and they being hardened by the deceitfulness of sin, even go back again, and settle down in the world lying in wickedness in one shape or another, that be like them.

2. There are two contrary principles in them, an earthly one and a heavenly one, grace and corruption, Gal. v. 17. If they had only the earthly principle, they would settle still with the world, they could not come away at all. If they had only the heavenly principle, they would be quite separated from the world, and their march from it would be at an end. But having both, the one puts them in continual hazard of the unclean thing, and the other prompts them to be making away from it.

3. They have peremptorily left their old rest, and are not yet come to their new rest, therefore they must be moving. They have left the city of destruction, but they are not come yet to the city of God, the New Jerusalem, Heb. iv. 9, 11. They are come out of Egypt, but they are not yet come to Canaan; but they are on their wilderness march, minded to hold on, while apostates are for returning to Egypt again.

Thirdly, They are non-conformists to the world, Rom. xii. 2. They do not conform themselves to the course of the world, Eph. ii. 2. Hence they are indeed the world's wonder, and at length the object of their reproach and spite, 1 Pet. iv. 4. Wherein they think it strange that you run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you. They dare not do what the world makes no bones of; they hate the courses that the world is fond of; and take pleasure in those things that are tasteless and sapless to the world. Being of God, it must be so; for,

1. They are of another country than the world, being heavenly men, born from above. They are pilgrims and strangers here; how then can they miss not to be conformed to the natives? Indeed if they were to settle among them, and to be naturalized, forgetting the heavenly country, they would fall in with their ways and courses, as apostates do. But they are only travelling through the world, and therefore it is not strange they quite differ in their language, habit, and manners, from the natives of the world.

2. They are of another nature than the men of the world, being partakers of the divine nature, 2 Pet. i. 4. Some men differ in their natural constitutions so, that what is one man's meat is another's poison. But the new nature in the regenerate differs farther from the old corrupt nature in the world. Grace gives the hearts of men

a new set, hangs a new bias on them, so that they dearly love what themselves before hated, and hate what before they loved. The new nature and the old course are inconsistent. One must quit the latter, or all pretence to the former.

This non-conformity lies not only in not doing what the world does, but in doing another way than the world does in that which they both do. So in those things which they both do, there is still a non-conformity to the world, which is seen in these three things.

1. In natural actions, as eating and drinking, *&c.* They that are of God must do these as well as they that are of the world; yet the former do not conform to the latter in the way of doing them. The way of the world in these things is merely selfish and carnal, to gratify a lust or appetite, without any eye to God in them, to his command, his glory, or to the fitting of them to serve God in their station, Zech. vii. 6. "When ye did eat, and when ye did drink, did ye not eat for yourselves, and drink for yourselves?" (Matth. xxiv. 38.) Hence conscience has with them nothing to do in the getting, or in the using of these things.

But they that are of God will take their religion to their bed and to their board, and regulate themselves therein according to the dictates, not of carnality, but conscience, 1 Cor. x. 31. The satisfying the necessities of the body, will not be to them the ends of their living, but the means of living, their end being to live to God; and therefore these things will be cut and carved as they may best contribute to that end, 1 Thess. iv. 4, 5.

2. In civil actions, as working, bargaining, guiding a family, serving, *&c.* The way of the world in these things, is to have no respect to the command or honour of God in them, to shuffle out the directions in their Bible from them, as a thing having no concern in these matters, Luke xvii. 28; to have no single eye to seek the good of those they have to do with, but to please themselves; or at best to be men-pleasers, not God pleasers in these things: to count exact truth and uprightness needless nicety.

But those that are of God dare not, will not, nay abhor to conform themselves to that way of the world. They will carry their religion into their callings, worldly business, and relations, 1 Cor. vii. 23, 24. They will look on God as the principle, whoever is the less principle party they have to do with, Prov. iii. 6. The end of regeneration is the restoring of sinners to conformity unto the rule of righteousness, whereof the sum is love to God and our neighbour, shewing itself in sincere endeavours to honour God, and to be beneficial to mankind, 1 John iii. 10. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil; whosoever doth not righte-

ousness, is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother."

3. In religious actions. It is not bare praying, hearing, &c. that will distinguish one from the world lying in wickedness; for all that religion is found among them too. But they have a way of their own in it, holding with the form, but denying the power, 2 Tim. iii. 5. contenting themselves with bodily exercise, while strangers to the spirituality of duties, Matth. xv. 8. seeking themselves in them, not God, Matth. vi. 2. making a shelter of them wherein to sin more at ease, Prov. vii. 14, 15; and putting them in Christ's room, by confidence in them, Rom. x. 3.

But those that are of God conform not to that way of religion. For to the regenerate it is not a piece of art, but of new nature; religion is a thing that their new nature leads them to. And what is natural people will still aim at the perfection of, and so they will study the power of godliness. And being of God, they will natively seek the enjoyment of God, as the infant seeks to suck the breasts of the mother that bare it; and they will seek the destruction of sin by their religion, as being a contrary principle thereto; and it will natively carry them out of themselves to Christ for all, since he is the life of the new creature. See their character, Phil. iii. 3. "We are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh."

Fourthly, They are in a state of opposition to the world lying in wickedness. This is plain from Gen. iii. 15. "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed." Jam. iv. 4. The two parties are like the company of two armies engaged against one another. When by regenerating grace one comes out from among them, he is not only separated from them, but set up in opposition to them. This says negatively,

1. Those that are of God are not the friends of the world, taking part with them against those that are of God. There are some not without pretences to religion, but as to matters of practice they are still upon the loose side; they will plead for Baal, and give squint strokes at tender holy walking. They will declaim against hypocrisy, being tongue tacked against profaneness; they have a vail to throw over the gross abominations of the licentious, but they will rip up the infirmities of the weak; they have a tongue soft as wool for the credit of the scandalous and profane, but piercing like a sword into the serious. Let these read the sentence of the Spirit of God, excommunicating them out of the communion of saints, James iv. 4. Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God; whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world, is the enemy of God.

2. They are not neuters in the quarrel with the world lying in wickedness. There are some who think that they do very well, if they do nothing against the cause of religion; but to act against the cause of wickedness in the world, is none of their business, it belongs not to them, not considering what Solomon says, Prov. xxviii. 4. "They that forsake the law, praise the wicked; but such as keep the law, contend with them." They think to keep peace with God, and with the world lying in wickedness too; but they are mistaken, it will not do. Whoever they be that are not content to list themselves under Christ's banner, to oppose and act against the world lying in wickedness, Christ denounces them enemies to him, Matth. xii. 30. "He that is not with me, is against me; and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad."

How can it be but that those who are of God are in a state of opposition to the world lying in wickedness?

(1.) The object of their love is the object of the world's hatred, which cannot miss to produce this. God in Christ is the principal object of the love of the regenerate, and him the world hates, John xv. 18. and they shew it in their hatred of his image, in his ordinances, his people, and especially in his law, because there it is most lively expressed. And can any thing be more natural, than for a son to be in a state of opposition to his Father's haters and enemies? Psal. cxxxix. 21. namely, to oppose them in their opposition, that is, their sin, not their persons.

(2.) They are under opposite heads, betwixt whom there is an irreconcilable war, Christ and the devil, Michael and the dragon. This war was proclaimed in paradise, Gen. iii. 15. and will never end, but in the destruction of the one party. Nobody can be neuter in such a case, but do make opposition. The arms of the parties are indeed very different. The world acts against those that are of God, by persecutions, reproaches, mockings, contempt and hatred of their persons, looseness of life, trampling on the laws and honour of God; the regenerate act against the world lying in wickedness: by hatred of their ways, loving their persons, testifying against them, endeavouring to reclaim them, rowing against the stream in a tender walk, mourning and praying for them. They that are not so engaged against the world, are not of God.

(3.) The interest of the two societies is downright opposite; so opposite that the one cannot be advanced but on the ruin of the other. The spreading of holiness is the interest that the one is pursuing, the promoting of sin is the interest pursued by the other; these are as opposite as light and darkness. And it is as sure that every man and woman is acting in this life to the promoting of one

of these two in the world, as that every person and thing will act agreeable to its own nature, Micah iv. 5. For all people will walk every one in the name of his God, and we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever. And therefore those that are of God are in a state of opposition to the world lying in wickedness.

Fifthly, There is a bond of brotherly love, whereby they are knit together among themselves, as children of one family. By this one may know himself to belong to the family of God, 1 John iii. 14. "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren;" and by it as a badge on-lookers may know they belong to it, John xiii. 35. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another." So that it is a sign that casts its light both inward and outward. The certainty hereof appears from several considerations.

1. They all love God their common Father, love his image, pressing to be like him as their main aim. Hence, since all the regenerate do bear God's image as begotten of him, they must love them also, 1 John v. 1. "Every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him." The love of God natively draws after it the Christian love of those that are of God.

They have forsaken the world for the society of the saints; and as the married woman forsakes her father's house, and joins herself into the house of her husband, thenceforth to look upon the interest thereof as her interest; so in the spiritual marriage with Christ and regeneration, the soul comes home to the society of the saints for good and all, in opposition to the world, cordially falling in with the call given, Psal. xlv. 10. "Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house."

3. The natural enmity against the seed of the woman that is inseparable from the seed of the serpent, evinceth this, Gen. iii. 15. In every unregenerate man there is a natural enmity against a holy God, his holy Christ, and his holy seed; their natures being as contrary as fire and water, that it is impossible ever they should be, as such, lovely in one another's eyes. And in regeneration, the serpentine nature is changed, the enmity removed, and consequently this love to the saints is fixed in its room, as a necessary consequent of the new nature.

4. As God is love, the devil is a mass of hatred and malice against God and man, so the two parties partake of their natures respectively. God bears a common love to his creatures, so as to do them good, and a special love to the saints; and those that are of God, accordingly have implanted in them a principle of love, of

good will and beneficence to mankind, Luke vi. 35. but a special love of delight in the saints, Psal. xvi. 3. Gal. vi. 10. Satan bears a hatred against men, especially holy men; but most of all he hates God; so his seed hate one another, Tit. iii. 3. and more keenly hate the heavenly seed, and that because of their hatred wherewith most of all they are irreconcileable to God, John xv. 18.

Object. Where are there greater heats and oppositions, than among the different parties in the church? where then is the brotherly love by which all are pretended to be knit? *Answ.* There is a difference betwixt the visible church, and those that are of God. In the visible church are many who are still of the world lying in wickedness, and they bring with them into the church, their natural enmity, hatred, and unchristian spirit, and exercise it in the things of God, to the marring of the purity, beauty, and peace of it. But this hellish fire belongs to the spirit of the world, and the blame of kindling it lies at the door of the world. And if the church, though imperfect were freely separated from the world lying in wickedness, it would be a lovely and loving society far beyond what it is. I own that these things are incident to those that are of God, as in the contention between Paul and Barnabas, Acts xv. 39. and the reason is, the remains of the spirit of the world in them are not yet purged away; but the cause of the quarrel is not what they conceive to be likeness, but unlikeness to God; and notwithstanding all their jarrings, they will still love them as they appear to have the image of God on them; for whatever they differ in, they agree in that. Wherefore we may lay down these conclusions,

1. They that are of God love the society of the regenerate, considered as a holy society, separated from the world lying in wickedness, Heb. xii. 22. The picture of that society drawn in the Bible, is beautiful in their eyes, more alluring to them than the richest, most powerful, and most gay and splended society in the world; and therefore they desire more to be of it, than of any other whatsoever. The grace in it glisters more in their eyes than gold in the world; and so it is not with others, 1 John ii. 15. Cant. i. 7.

2. They love particular saints of their acquaintance for what likeness to God appears in them, 2 John ii. 2. There are many things about the children of God, that may move love to them in a child of the devil, their relation, usefulness, and agreeableness in several things to them! but their spiritual beauty in conformity to the holy Jesus, is a motive and ground of love to them, not in the unregenerate, but in the regenerate partakers of the same divine nature. Upon that score the serpentine enmity rises in the one, and love in the other.

3. They love all the saints without exception, so far as they can

take them up to be so, Eph. i. 15. They will never confine their love to a party, to whom God has not confined his grace, nor to such as are attended with worldly advantages, despising the rest on whom the world particularly frowns, Psal. cxix. 63. If they should do so, they would evidence that it is not God they love in them, but themselves; that it is not the advantages they have as the darlings of heaven, but of the world. But whatever defects are about them, the appearance of God's grace in them will supply them all, to the rendering them lovely in the eyes of those that are of God, though not to others, whereby they are tried and cast.

4. The more gracious and holy any are, the more will they be loved of them. For the more of the cause there is in any, the more there must be of the effect. And hence it is, that the most tender and holy Christians are at once the objects of the greatest love of the regenerate, and the world's greatest hatred. Many can endure holiness while it remains dim and obscure in men, that spit venom against it, where it shines clear; so formal hypocrites are like the owl that can come abroad in the twilight, but cannot endure the light of the sun: an eminent instance were the Pharisees to Christ.

5. *Lastly*, The more any have of the world's hatred for their opposition to it, they will love them the more. As fire burns keenest in the sharpest frost, so it has always been observed, that the love of the godly to one another was strongest, when the world's hatred of them was most keen. So dangerous it is to be found joining the torrent of the world against serious godly ones.

Sixthly, Their hearts are kindly disposed towards the holy law. As the old corrupt nature reigning in the unregenerate fills them with enmity against it, Rom. viii. 7. so the new nature in them kindly plies and bends towards it, Psal. cxix. 97. The reason is, the image of God expressed in the law is begun to be drawn on their souls, so that their new nature and the holy law point both one way, Heb. viii. 10. It is true, there is a resistance and aversion of the unrenewed part; but that is not total, and there is a gracious principle that condemns it, Rom. vii. 22, 23. Hence,

1. They willingly take on the yoke of obedience, and go under it, because it is agreeable to their new nature, 1 John v. 3. "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not grievous." Christ's yoke is a galling yoke to the necks of the men of the world, because their is no suitableness of their nature to it: they spurn it, their hearts rise against it; fain would they be quit of it, that they might take their swing according to their lust. But it is not so to those who are of God, Matth. xi. 29, 30. Fain would they be rid of their lusts, but not of the law, Rom. vii. 24.

2. they are universal in their obedience to their knowledge, Psal. cxix. 6. "Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments." When there is an artificial bending towards the law, upon a particular design, there is a picking and choosing of the parts thereof most agreeable to one's circumstances; hence some fall in with duty to God, but make no conscience of their duty to men; others fall in with personal duty, but make no conscience of relative duties; they comply with duties of commanding, but make no conscience of duties of subjection: for the one they can digest, but not the other. But where the bent is new and natural, there will be a falling in with the whole, since the whole is agreeable to the new nature, and is of a piece, and laid on by the same authority, James ii. 10, 11.

Lastly, They overcome the world, 1 John v. 4. "Whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." Having separated from the world, it will pursue them, as the Egyptians did Israel, and it will have a war with them, encountering them with its smiles and frowns; but whatever way it attacks them they overcome; though they may lose in particular battles, yet they are the overcomers in the main. And,

1. They overcome its smiles, holding fast by their God, religion, and duty, in the face of a smiling world, Job i. 1—5. Many a man that sometimes seemed to be separated from the world, is brought by the warm sun of worldly prosperity to drop off his garments of religion and a tender walk, and plunge himself into the way of the world lying in wickedness. And there is no question but worldly prosperity is given to men for their trial, as well as adversity; and many come foul off in it, Prov. i. 32. But those who are once truly separate will overcome.

2. They overcome its frowns, holding fast by their God, religion, and duty, as sweet, though the world turn never so sour, Hab. iii. 17, 18. "Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines, the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat, the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." The sour world gets the day of many, by sucking the sap out of religion to them, rendering the word of promise and spiritual comforts tasteless to them; so that though when the world gave them comfort, they had some comfort in religion too; yet when the world's comforts are dried up, the comforts of religion are gone too, Exod. vi. 9. That says the world was the main pillar on which their comfort stood. But though the

world may prevail to brangle thus with them that are of God, yet they will not be quite overcome, but will be overcomers in the case; shewing that they are in hope of something better than what they have lost, that there is something for which they can part with all to obtain it, and that there is a fountain running while the world's cisterns are dry.

I proceed now to consider the last doctrine, namely,

DOCT. III. The whole unregenerate world lieth in wickedness.

In handling this subject, we shall,

I. Shew why the society of the unregenerate is called the world.

II. Offer some description of the unregenerate world.

III. Make improvement.

I. I am to shew why the society of the unregenerate is called the world. It is plain here, that though the regenerate really are in this world, as well as the unregenerate; yet the unregenerate are by the Spirit of God called the world, in contradistinction to the regenerate, as if they possessed the earth alone, and no other were mixed with them in it. The reasons are,

1. They are the main body of the world; and so few of the other sort are mixed with them, that they alter not the denomination, John i. 10. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. The regenerate are but here one and there one, but the unregenerate appear in multitudes; the former are but as gleanings, the latter as the harvest. What safety can men propose then in the way of the multitude, the course of the world?

The scripture is plain in this, Matth. vii. 13, 14. "Enter ye in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat; because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." Luke xiii. 24. "Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able." Christ's flock is a very little flock, in comparison of the devil's herd, Luke xii. 32. And it is, alas! demonstrable beyond contradiction. Dividing the world into thirty parts, nineteen of them are possessed by Pagan idolaters, who know not the true God; six by Jews, Turks, and Saracens; so five only remain which profess Christianity. Thus Christians by profession are but five to twenty-five. Of these five two are reckoned to be of the Greek church, much sunk in ignorance, and the other three idolatrous Papists and Protestants. And among Protestants, how many are openly profane or grossly ignorant, having no tolerable shew of

piety? how many are mere formalists, strangers to the work of grace, and exercises of godliness?

2. They are the natives, others are but strangers among them, and such are not counted in a general denomination of a society. They are in the scripture-style, the inhabitants of the world, Isa. xxvi. 18. of the earth and sea, Rev. xii. 12. as being the natives of it, having their birth and breeding only of the world. The regenerate are sojourners among them, pilgrims and strangers among them, Heb. xi. 13.

3. Their spirit, temper, and disposition, chief aims and designs, are all worldly, there is nothing heavenly in them, Psal. xvii. 14. Their souls are indeed of heavenly original; but they are sunk, like a pearl in a mire, in the profits, pleasures, vanities, and cares of the world. Hence they are called flesh, as if they had no spirit in them, John iii. 6. and are said to be in the flesh, Rom. viii. 8. For they can relish nothing but what is fleshly or worldly; their views are confined within the compass of the present world; on these things they value themselves; and in effect their souls have resigned themselves slaves to their bodies, and their consciences to their senses; being an effect in their bodies as salt only to keep them from rotting.

4. They are the lower part of the rational kind, the dreggy part of the creation. Therefore, whereas the church is called heaven, and the regenerate sons of God, heavenly men; they are called the earth, children of men, earthly men, Gen. xi. 1. and vi. 2. 1 Cor. xv. 48. For as when the Spirit moved, and the divine word passed upon the shapeless mass at the beginning, the finer parts went upward, or off from the dreggy gross part, which remaining lowest was called earth; so the word and Spirit passing on the mass of mankind, that part thereof which is thereby regenerate gets a new nature, ascends in their designs and aims, and at length become equal with the angels, Luke xx. 36; and the unregenerate part that is left below, being earthly, sensual, devilish; for the time are like the beasts, following their fleshly appetite, as dogs and swine the grossest of them; and in the end are thrust down into the place of devils.

5. *Lastly*, Because all in the world without exception are originally of their kind, unregenerate, John iii. 6. Even the elect themselves are once unregenerate; they who are now of God, were sometime of the unregenerate world, Tit. iii. 3. So that irregeneracy is the state of all the world originally, in which state all lie in wickedness, Psal. xiv. 3. Only those that are of God have heard Heaven's voice, as saying, Come up hither, and so have been separated from the world. But the society they come from is still the world lying in wickedness.

A Description of the Unregenerate World.

II. The second head proposed was, to offer some description of the unregenerate world. We have seen some of the characters of those that are of God, I shall now lay before you a view of the world lying in wickedness. That world is (as it were two hemispheres) twofold.

1. The lower world lying in wickedness. That is the region of death, eternal death; the lake of fire; the pit, the abyss of hell. The inhabitants thereof are the devils, and the souls of the damned, who have lived and died in their unregenerate state, and will continue for ever in it.

2. The upper world lying in wickedness. That is the land of the living, this present evil world, made up of all those who are living in their unregenerate state, the black state of nature, strangers to Christ and the power of godliness. It is the upper unregenerate world we are to speak of, not the lower, when we have observed that they are but one world in different circumstances.

1st, The lower and upper unregenerate world are indeed one world, one kingdom of Satan, one family of his. As it is but one family of saints that is in heaven and earth, Eph. iii. 15; so it is but one family of sinners that is in hell and on earth. Therefore those here are declared children of hell, as well as those that are there, Matth. xxiii. 15. of the devil, John viii. 44. So men dying unregenerate, go to their own place, Acts i. 25; and though they change their place, they change not their society, being gathered with those in death, in society with whom they lived.

2dly, But only they are in different circumstances.

(1.) The state of the one is alterable, as of those who are upon a trial; of the other unalterable, as those on whom a definitive sentence is passed; this is held forth in the case of the rich man and his five brethren, Luke xvi. 25—28. Those of them here are upon their way in their travel, and may change their route, and go heaven-ward; the other are at their journey's end, and can move no more from their place.

(2.) So the case of the one is not without hope, but that of the other absolutely hopeless. They are both prisoners; but the one are prisoners of hope, Zech. ix. 12; but the earth with her bars is about the other for ever. There is a gulf fixed between heaven and them, impassable. Here they are in darkness indeed, but it is not outer darkness, as in the case of the damned. Here the voice of the turtle is heard, but there nothing but yelling.

(3.) And *lastly*, Here they lie in wickedness with some ease and

pleasure: there they lie in it with none at all. Their pleasurable sins are there at an end, Rev. xviii. 14. Nothing of them remains with them, but the guilt of them, and cutting remorse for them; the sweet of their cup is drunk out, and nothing remains but the bitter dregs. One encourages another here, and men please themselves with the multitudes going their way; but there the throng is far greater; for whereas there are some constantly dropping off here, the wicked of all generations are there, and none return; yet the more the worse, Luke xvi. 28.

But now as to the upper unregenerate world, we shall first consider the parts, and then the state thereof.

I. *The Parts of the Unregenerate World.*

First, The religious part of it, that is as the heavens in that world. Wonder not that we speak of the religious part of the world lying in wickedness; for there is some religion, but of the wrong stamp, in that world, and one part of it is exalted above another, as the heaven above the earth, Matth. xi. 23. This makes them appear like the regenerate, in the outward man, having a form of godliness, and imitating the saints in their outward actions and behaviour, 2 Tim. iii. 5.; being formalists, hypocrites, tares among the wheat, but still strangers to a work of grace; and so much the farther that they have a shew of it, Matth. xxi. 31. Two things bring religion into the world lying in wickedness, where there is no regeneration.

1. A natural conscience, which dictates that there is a God, a difference betwixt good and evil, rewards and punishments after this life, Rom. ii. 15. Though this is wrestled down in some of that world, that it has very little power with them; yet with others that are no more regenerate than they, it is improved, by the light of the gospel in the word, by good education, consideration, and thought; so that they prove morally serious, regular in their lives, embracing the external parts of religion, though unregenerate.

2. Interest, which sways the men of the world to it several ways. In some times and places religion is fashionable, gains men credit and reputation; so they embrace it for their credit, as the Pharisees did, Matth. vi. 2. In some cases worldly advantages and profits attend it, and that bait draws many worldly men to it, as it did the multitude to Christ for the loaves, John vi. 26, 27. And then its declared eternal advantages follow it, salvation from the wrath of God, and heaven's happiness; and a carnal sight of these things draws many, who are merely selfish in their pursuit, as was the case of that multitude, who said, ver. 34. "Lord, evermore give us this bread."

Secondly, The moral part of it, who are like the air in that world, not rising so high as the former, nor sunk so low as the other in immorality and profaneness. These are they who keep off from religion and the profession of it and from gross profanity too. They are civil and neighbourly men; just, honest, and upright in their dealings between man and man; and despise religion from the fraud and deceit of some whom they see profess it, Matth. xviii. 7. Some such there have been among Heathens, and some among Christians. Two things, besides natural conscience and interest, bring in morality into the world lying in wickedness.

1. Civil society, by which means men may live at peace in the world, and be protected from injuries; for this cause men combine together in societies, appoint government, governors, and laws over themselves, which must establish morality, without which society cannot consist. And for this cause government is a great mercy, external order being kept among men by that means. Without it there would be no living in the world, but the weak would be swallowed up, and all filled with violence, rapine, and outrage.

2. Natural modesty and temper, in respect of which there is a great difference among even worldly men. Whatever internal or external cast it be owing to, it is evident, there is a certain simplicity, candour, integrity, and benevolence in some, whereby they differ, from others that have a cast of a spirit to fraud, disingenuousness, pride, imperiousness, and violence, and yet the former are of the world, as well as the latter; and so in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity.

Thirdly and *lastly*. The immoral part of it. These are the earth and sea in that world, the grossest part of it all, whose conversation is neither bounded with religion or morality, but is just vile, irreligious, and immoral as occasion serves. This is the far greatest part of that world, and in it abound gross abominations, which bring God's wrath on lands and churches. The abominations, therein appearing are innumerable. See 1 Cor. vi. 9; Gal. v. 19—21; Tit. iii. 3. Two things concur to fill the world with immorality.

1. The corruption of human nature, the natural bent of which lies to all enormities. This was the spring of the flood of wickedness, and of water, that overflowed the old world, Gen. vi. 5. The heart of man is a depth of wickedness, that casts it forth as a fountain doth its waters; and then it gets leave to run freely without restraint, it sends forth plentifully, Mark vii. 21, 22. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness.

2. Occasions of sin and temptations thereto, which offer themselves thick in this evil world; because the multitude is of that sort, Matth. xviii. 7. Snares are strowed every where, and every temptation going in the world has a lust in the heart akin to it, that tends so natively to unite, that it is hard to keep them at meeting from closest embraces.

And there are two sorts that are most exposed to temptations, the rich and the poor, which make them generally speaking to be of the immoral part of the world, though there want not some of both sorts that are not so. This Agur observed long ago, Prov. xxx. 8, 9. "Remove far from me (says he) vanity and lies; give me neither poverty nor riches, feed me with food convenient for me; lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain."

1*st*, The wealth of the rich makes immorality abound among them. It swells the heart in pride, and fills them with admiration of themselves; it ministers much fuel to their lusts, and affords them occasions of fulfilling them. The natural vanity of the heart and mind, has a broad field to rove about in, so that they are apt to forget themselves and think their circumstances give them an allowance to make themselves vile, and that the laws of God and man are not made but for to hold the poorer sort, Prov. xxx. 9. Hence our Lord says, Matth. xix. 23, 24. "Verily I say unto you, that a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven." "And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." And says the apostle, 1 Cor. i. 26. "Ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called." They are to be pitied for their snares and temptations.

2*dly*, The poor, those who are in extreme poverty. Among them also immorality remarkably abounds. Their condition deprives them of many advantages others have. They are generally neglected in their education, all their care being to get to put in their mouths. They have rarely the advantage of good company. Their pinching circumstances embitter their spirits, that they relish not the things of God, and afford many snares and temptations to dishonesty, lying, falsehood, and all manner of wickedness, whereby they may think to better their outward circumstances. And when they turn idle, and vague up and down, their case readily turns most hopeless, Prov. xxx. 9. forecited, Jer. v. 4. "Therefore have I said, Surely these are poor, they are foolish; for they know not the way of the Lord, nor the judgment of their God."

Hence may be seen the reason why the greatest regularity of life is found among those of the middle sort, though some of them are immoral too. They want the snares and temptations of the rich on the one hand, and of the poor on the other. They have neither the full idleness of the one, nor the poverty and idleness of the other.

If we compare the immoral part of the world lying in wickedness with the other two, though it is true they are all of the same world, and will perish if they be not separated from it; yet the religious and moral have the advantage of the immoral.

1. In this life, in many respects. They walk more agreeable to the dignity of human nature, than the immoral, who are more akin to the brutes, being led by their brutal passions and affections even as they. They are more useful and beneficial to mankind; whereas the immoral are the pests of human society, working mischief to one or other. They have more inward quiet, and are not put on the rack that immorality brings on men, to compass their mischievous designs, to cover their deeds, and defend them. And so they have more outward safety, their regular lives being a fence to them, both from danger without and within.

2. In the life to come. Though the world, the unregenerate world's religion and morality will not bring them to heaven, yet it will make them a softer hell than the immoral shall have, Rev. xx. 12, 13. And no man can doubt but works of morality are not so ill as works of immorality; unsanctified soberness is not so bad as revelling and open profaneness. It is true, hypocrites shall have a hot part in hell; but can one imagine that their throwing off the mask, and giving themselves the swing, will make an easier part? No; Rev. xxi. 8. "The fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death." No doubt the more light men sin against, their condemnation will be the more aggravated; but certainly it will be sorer for immoral Pagans than moral ones, for immoral Christians than moral ones, where the worm never dieth, and the fire is not quenched. Conscience will have less guilt, and not so deep, to charge on the one as on the other.

II. *The State of the Unregenerate World.*

Having seen the parts of that world, we are next to view the state of these parts; and that is, the whole world lieth in wickedness, the moral as well as immoral part, and the religious as well as the other. It is the common state of the whole unregenerate world; whatever differences are among them, they all agree in this, they are lying in wickedness. In speaking to this, I shall,

1. Confirm and evince the truth of it in the general.

2. Explain this state of the unregenerate world, their lying in wickedness.

FIRST, I am to confirm and evince the truth of the doctrine in the general.

First, Satan is the god of the whole unregenerate world; how can it miss then to be wholly lying in wickedness? 2 Cor. iv. 4. It is the honour and advantage of the regenerate, that God is their God, Heb. viii. 10; but the unregenerate world is apostate from God, and have taken Satan in his room, giving him the homage they owe to God. Now Satan is the god of the unregenerate world lying in wickedness,

1. In respect of his god-like power over them; which we may take up in these particulars.

(1.) The sovereignty of it. The unregenerate world is Satan's dominion, whereof he is prince, John xii. 31. and xiv. 30. Though he is under check and control of heaven, and the most fearful vengeance is abiding him from the Lord, yet he is a sovereign prince among them, ruling more absolutely than any prince in this world doth his subjects, 2 Tim. ii. 26. None of them all have their subjects so much at their beck, as he has the men of the world.

(2.) The rivalship of it, being set up and managed just to confront the kingdom of God among men. Though Satan is the most miserable thing of the whole creation; yet, by a peculiar pride and spite against God, he sets up directly, and immediately against God and his Son Jesus Christ, whose kingdom the regenerate are. And his rival kingdom is the unregenerate world. Between these is the lasting enmity, Gen. iii. 15. and these are the opposite kingdoms that can never mix, Psal. xii. 7; and the design of the gospel is to pull down Satan's kingdom, Acts xxvi. 18; Col. i. 13.

(3.) The extent of it, reaching over the whole world, from one end of the earth to the other. All the power that ever the Chaldean, Persian, Grecian, and Roman monarchs had, never reached but over a part of the world; but the power of the devil reaches over all countries, wherever unregenerate men are.

(4.) The nature of it. He receives external worship from many in the world, having many whole nations at his devotion. But from the whole unregenerate world he receives the subjection, homage, and obedience of the inner man; and that is peculiarly due to God; Eph. ii. 2. "Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." Men of greatest eminency over others can only pretend to rule their out-

ward man; the soul, the inner man, must be left to God; and that Satan usurps in the unregenerate world. He entered into Judas moving him to betray Christ, filled the hearts of Ananias and Sapphira to lie to the Holy Ghost, *&c.*

2. In respect of his prime origination of their corruption. As from God men have their nature, whereby they are men, and their new nature whereby they are regenerate men; so from the devil men have all the corruption and sin of their nature, whereby they are unregenerate men; wherefore as men owe themselves to God, as men and Christians; so they are owing to the devil, as they are unregenerate men lying in wickedness, See John xiv. 30. He hath of his own in them. Hence,

(1.) The devil is the common father of the unregenerate world as such. It is owing to him as the procreating cause thereof. It was the spawn of the old serpent conveyed by the first sin into human nature, that corrupted all mankind. Hence men are said to be of him, 1 John iii. 12. and of him as a child is of a father, John viii. 44. So the world lying in wickedness is called our father's house or family, Psal. xlv. 10. And not only are notoriously wicked persons, but all the unregenerate called children of the devil, 1 John iii. 10; as bearing his image, John viii. 44. "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do."

(2.) Their continuation in that their state, they have from him also. God preserves by his providence all that his own hands made, and the divine preservation is in effect a continued creation. But since the corruption of the world is originally from the devil, not from God; the maintenance of it comes the same way. So Satan upholds that world by his power, and he is incessant in his working for that end.

This gives a very dismal view of the unregenerate world; it is not God's world, but the devil's world, deriving its original from him, and over which he has the power of a god. Whence we must see, that it is surely,

(1.) The mire of sin, in which the miserable inhabitants must be continually wallowing; for nothing doth so much please the god of that world. He is an enemy to all good, and as far as his power reaches, no good can have place. The dust is his meat, and so a life of sin is a wallowing in the mire.

(2.) The region of death and destruction, which God will certainly destroy, if once he had his own out of it. For Christ came to destroy the works of the devil.

Secondly, Spiritual darkness, thick darkness, is over the whole of that world, Eph. v. 8. how can any thing but works of darkness be

found in it? The Egyptian darkness was an emblem of this, they had a thick darkness, only in Goshen there was light; so the Egyptians rose not from their place to do business, Exod. xx. 22, 23. Consider,

1. The sun went down on all mankind in Adam's transgressing the covenant; the light of God's countenance was then withdrawn, and so there was a terrible eclipse, witness Adam's hiding himself from the presence of God, and all men naturally following his footsteps in that.

2. The unregenerate world remains as Adam left them, the Sun of righteousness Jesus Christ is not yet arisen to them, Mal. iv. 2, 3. Though he has spread abroad his light in the world, it is not yet come into their hearts. They know him not, they have not yet received the saving illumination of his Spirit.

Their state in point of darkness concludes them under sin, far from all good.

(1.) They are in darkness, Acts xxvi. 18. Every unregenerate man sits in darkness, Matth. iv. 16. He is like a captive or prisoner in a dark dungeon, where no light comes. The smoke of the opened pit that was let into the world by sin, makes thick darkness there, and that is round about every man till converting grace scatter it.

(2.) They are under the power of darkness, Col. i. 13. They are not like those that are in the dark, but can come out when they please into the light; but they are under the power of it, as in chains of darkness. No human art can remove the darkness of a natural state, nay it retains its power over them in the midst of gospel light. God alone can dispel it, 2 Cor. iv. 6.

(3.) The powers of hell rule in that darkness, Eph. vi. 12. When the night comes on, the wild beasts come out of their dens, and range abroad; and so the dark world is Satan's walk, where he goes about like a roaring lion. Hence it comes to pass, that if any light begin to peep in, Satan presently stops it, 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4. Thus convictions are stifled, and resolves of reformation fly up as dust.

(4.) It is a darkness of blindness; they really have not eyes to see with, Deut. xxix. 4. A child of God may be in the dark at a time, but then he will come forth at length into the light, and will see; but every unregenerate man is spiritually blind, Rev. iii. 17. the darkness has blinded him, 1 John ii. 11. He wants a faculty of discerning spiritual things in their true natures, 1 Cor. ii. 14. Their understanding is darkened.

(5.) The light in the unregenerate world is darkness, Matth. vi. 23. That is, it is a false light which quite misrepresents things, so they call good evil, and evil good. Hence to them the vanities of

a present world are substantial, and the treasure hid in the field of the gospel is but a trifle. And because they think they see, their case is more hopeless, as Christ said to the Pharisees, John ix. 41, "If ye were blind ye should have no sin; but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth."

(6.) *Lastly*, There is a continual night in the unregenerate world, 1 Thess. v. 5. There is an eternal day in heaven, no night there; with the regenerate the day is broken; but with the unregenerate the black and dark night still remains, Isa. viii. 20. From all which it appears, that they lie in sin, as prisoners in a dungeon; and that an unconverted state is the suburbs of hell, where there is outer darkness.

Thirdly, They are all lying under the curse, Gal. iii. 10. For not being in Christ, they are under the law as a Covenant of works, Rom. iii. 19. It is the regenerate only that are delivered from it, Rom. viii. 1. "There is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." Hence all the unregenerate are declared out of Christ, 2 Cor. v. 17. and debarred out of heaven, John iii. 3. And whatever differences may be among them as to their way and walk, the curse goes over their whole world. Now this proves that they are lying in wickedness two ways.

1. In that the curse always implies wickedness. A holy God will lay none under the curse of the law, but such as are lying under sin. It is wickedness that draws the curse after it; and the latter could have had no place in the world, till once the former made way for it. So being children of wrath by nature, proves us to be in a state of corruption by nature.

2. While it lies on, sin and wickedness retain their strength, 1 Cor. xv. 56. "The strength of sin is the law." The reason is, the curse on a sinner effectually bars all sanctifying influences from heaven; so that it is not possible that the sinner can rise up from his state of sin, while in that case. When the fig-tree was cursed, it withered away; and so does the world in wickedness under the curse. Therefore faith is the only way to holiness; for by it alone the sinner is united to Christ, and justified, whereby the curse is removed; and then he is sanctified, or brought out of his state of wickedness.

Fourthly, They are all dead in sin, Eph. ii. 1. There was a great cry in Egypt, when there was one dead in every family; but the unregenerate world is all dead together. God, the life of the soul, is departed from them; they are alienated from the life of God, their speech is laid, and their spiritual senses are bound up. So that world is the region of the shadow of death. There is this difference indeed,

1. Some are dead and rotten; these are the immoral part of the world, who by their profane lives are as intolerable to sober men, as a stinking carcase; whose conversation, by reason of their profanity, is like the opening of an unripe grave, Rom. iii. 13. therefore compared to dogs and swine.

2. Some are embalmed dead; these are the moral and religious part of the world. A form of godliness, the study and practice of moral virtue, is to them as the embalming of the dead corpse, though they cannot put spiritual life in a soul. So that these also are dead still, and lying dead in sin, though they smell not so rank as the profane and immoral.

Lastly, They are all destitute of every principle of holiness, and there cannot be an effect without a cause of it; there can be no acts of holiness without a principle to proceed from. They are destitute,

1. Of the Spirit of God; he dwells not in them, Jude, 19. compare 1 Cor. ii. 14. All true sanctification according to the scripture is by the Spirit; it is his taking possession of the soul that looses the bands of sin and death, Rom. viii. 2. and he dwells in all that are Christ's, ver. 9. But they are possessed by the spirit of the world, which is opposite to the Spirit of God, and has contrary effects, 1 John iv. 5. They are of the world; therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them.

2. They are destitute of the new nature; it is by regeneration the new man is framed; in the unregenerate is the old man alone, which is corrupt with his deeds, Eph. iv. 22. Since then the tree is not good, how can the fruit be good? If the new nature is totally wanting, how can there be the actions, life, and conversation of the new frame?

3. They are destitute of faith. And without that there can be nothing acceptable to God, Heb. xi. 6. Feigned faith they may have; but true faith they have not; for that unites with Christ, and makes a new creature.

4. *Lastly*, Love, the immediate principle of all acceptable obedience, is wanting in them; for that proceeds from faith, and faith works by it. They cannot love God, they have not believed in him, for these go together. And where no love is, there can be no holy obedience.

Secondly, I come now to explain this state of the unregenerate world, there lying in wickedness. And we shall consider,

1. What of wickedness they lie in.

2. How they lie in it.

1. I am to consider what of wickedness they lie in. All the unregenerate world lies,

FIRST, In a state of sin and wickedness, Acts viii. 23. I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity. Their state before the Lord is a sinful and wicked state; they have never been washed, nor purged from their sin. They are all over sinful and wicked, as over head and ears in the mire, Rev. iii. 17. This we take up in two things.

First, Their nature is wholly corrupted with sin and wickedness, Matth. vii. 18. Some of them may have a fair shew outwardly, but inwardly they are all overspread with the leprosy of sin, wholly corrupt, John iii. 6. The infection by the first sin has gone over the whole man, from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot. And the cure has never yet been begun in them, as having never been touched with regenerating grace. Even the saints' nature is corrupt, but they are renewed in part; but the unregenerate are wholly corrupted in the whole man, Isa. viii. 10; there is not the least stroke of purity in them, Tit. i. 15.

I. Their souls in all their faculties are overspread with sin, and wholly corrupted.

(1.) Their mind and understanding is wretchedly vitiated. It is overwhelmed with gross darkness as to spiritual things, Eph. iv. 17, 18. Darkness is over all that region; it is the land of darkness and shadow of death, where the very light is darkness; so that they cannot receive the things of God, more than a blind man the light of the sun, 1 Cor. ii. 14. So unbelief reigns there, they cannot believe, for they cannot see, Eph. ii. 2.

(2.) Their will is wholly perverse and rebellious against God, neither plying nor able to ply to the will of God, Rom. viii. 7. The wrong set it got by the fall, it keeps; and nothing less than creating power can give it a new set. What God wills not, that they will, and what he wills, they will not; so that the holy law has an irritating effect on them. It is called a stony heart; break it may, but bow it cannot, till melted down by regenerating grace.

(3.) Their affections are all in disorder, Jer. xvii. 9. There is no moderating of them, by religion and reason, but they are turbulent and unmanageable, Jer. ii. 23, 24. They are wretchedly misplaced; they love what they should loath, and loath what they should love. They can keep no measure, they run to evil, and what is good is against the grain with them. They are monsters in spiritual things; their hearts are where their feet should be, on the world, and their heels lifted up against heaven.

(4.) Their conscience is in miserable plight. Tit. i. 15. It is unfit to do its office truly for want of saving illumination. Hence it is a lax conscience, that lets many evils pass without any check at all;

being silent and senseless; but as to gross sins, in checking which it becomes through custom in them very remiss and easy. And if at any time it be awakened, it is easily bribed or boasted to silence.

2. The body partakes of that corruption, by communication with the sinful soul. It incites to sin; is a house wherein the soul finds many a snare spread for it; so that many, to gratify their senses and bodily appetites, make shipwreck of their souls. Therefore the apostle says, "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway," 1 Cor. ix. 27. It serves the soul in much sin, with the members thereof instruments of unrighteousness, Rom. vi. 13. The eyes and ears are windows whereat death comes into the soul; the tongue an unruly evil; the lips unclean, the throat an open sepulchre; the feet swift to mischief; and the belly made a god, not only by them that feed delicately, but those that live on coarse fair, Zech. vii. 6.

Secondly, Their lives and conversations are wholly corrupted. Psal. xiv. 3. For the fountain being poisoned, no pure streams can come forth from thence, Matth. xii. 34. The conversation of unregenerate men is one continued course of error, and wandering out of the way of God's commandments. Some of them are nearer the way than others of them, but all of them are quite off it, Psal. xiv. 3. Whether they move slow or fast, they are out of course, Eccl. x. 15. For many of their actions are ill in themselves, in the very matter of them condemned by the law of God, and which they never truly repent of. All of them are wrong in the manner, the best of them are marred in the making, through the want of right principles, motives, and ends.

SECONDLY, The whole unregenerate world lies under the dominion and reigning power of sin and wickedness, Rom. vi. 17. Even in the regenerate sin dwells, as a troublesome guest; but it has lost the throne in the heart. But in the unregenerate, it has full sway, and is the sovereign commanding principle in them. There are two things that evidence this.

1. Sin is in them in its full strength and vigour, and therefore rules and commands all. The strength of sin is the law, 1 Cor. xv. 56. and they are under the law, under it as a covenant of works, and therefore under the curse. And wherever the curse lies, there sin remains in its strength and power; and there is no cutting off the locks of sin, and breaking the power of it, but by removing the curse, and delivering from the law as a covenant, Rom. vi. 14.

2. It possesses them alone without an opposite principle. The old man of sin has not only the possession of every part, but of the

whole of every part, there being no principle of grace brought in upon it to counteract it. In the regenerate there is a corrupt principle indeed, called the flesh; but it reigns not, because there is an opposite principle brought in upon it to resist it, Gal. v. 17. But the unregenerate are wholly flesh, John iii. 6. So they are like the dead man, where death bears full sway; in the other death and disease are struggling for the mastery.

THIRDLY, They lie in the habitual practice of sin and wickedness, Psal. xiv. 1. "The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God; they are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good." Where sin reigns in the heart, one's course of life cannot be otherwise; if the eye be evil, the whole body must be full of darkness. Where the old corrupt nature remains in its vigour, it is impossible but the life and conversation must be corrupt too. It is true, there is a great difference of life and practice among the men of the world; but that all the unregenerate lie in the practice of sin and wickedness, however they differ in the kinds of it, is clear from the following considerations.

First, The bent, strain, and course of their life is quite wrong, Eph, ii. 1, 2. They are off from the mark; Adam led us all off the road, and they are not brought to it again. However quickly they move at any time, they are always like an arrow shot beside the mark, a traveller that is off his road, Eccl. x. 15. They are a company of wanderers, straying sheep, wandering on the mountains of vanity, 1 Pet. ii. ult. though they go their sundry ways, Isa. liii. 6; some wandering in the wilderness of formality, others in the mires and bogs of profanity. But all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, Rom. iii. 23.

Secondly, Any good they do is accidental, even as a wanderer in his course of wandering may stumble sometimes on the road; but it is not the product of their main scope and aim. So the Danites consulted God as to their way, not that they were seeking an occasion of it, but an occasion met them, Judges xviii. 5. So some expound that passage, Lev. xxvi. 23. If ye will not be reformed by me by these things, but will walk contrary to me, &c. Unregenerate men may do good; but it is by the by only, as it happens to suit with their particular humours and interests; for self is the dead sea with them, wherein all is swallowed up; and they are unconverted.

Thirdly, The best things they do are sin, unapproved, unaccepted of God, Prov. xv. 8. The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord, Isa. lxvi. 3. "He that killeth an ox, is as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck; he

that offereth an oblation, as if he offered swine's blood; he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an idol." They reckon wrong, dividing their actions into good works and ill works; they are entirely divided into glistering sins, and black and dark sins; and what they call their good works, are but glistering sins. For they are not done in faith; and whatsoever is not of faith, is sin, Rom. xiv. ult. Their sinful unregenerate state corrupts all, as a tainted vessel doth the liquor poured into it, Hag. ii. 11—14. Their actions materially good, are really evil, as wrong in the principles, manner, and end.

Lastly, Whatever good an unregenerate man does, he still lives in the allowed practice of some sin without repenting or forsaking it. Let him have never so many good things about him, there is still one thing lacking, that mars all, Mark x. 21. This will be evident, if ye consider,

1. That an universal and impartial respect to the commands of God, is a mark of the regenerate, Psal. cxix. 9. "Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments." This bears that in the case of others there is always some exception, they never go along with the holy law without reserve. There is always something in Christ that offends them, that they stick at, and cannot go down with them, Matth. xi. 6.

2. Sin's reign being still entire in them, it must have some lust or other for its sceptre to command by, Rom. vi. 12. The current or channel of a water may be altered; but as long as the fountain is not dried up, it will have some channel to run in. A man's particular predominant may alter; but while unregenerate, he will always have some predominant, that shall command all.

3. The heart of man must needs hang on at one door or other for rest to itself. Faith carries the soul to take up its rest in God, Heb. iv. 3. But the unregenerate being unbelievers, do not make God their rest: therefore without controversy they will be found about the creature's door, seeking their rest there. So the heart has still some secret haunt of lust or other, that it can never be driven away from.

That haunt of the heart will be found in one of two.

1*st*, In the desires of the flesh, Eph. ii. 3. There the grosser part of the world do nestle, who live as if they were nothing but flesh, and had nothing but the body, and a present life, to care for. And here one of two things will readily be found the reigning sin of the unregenerate.

1. Covetousness and worldly mindedness. There is in the world the lust of the eye, the gains and profits of a present world; and

there many an unsanctified heart has its secret haunt, ever minding earthly things, Phil. iii. 19. Here is the bait for the rich and the poor, the main stream of their cares runs there, the one for increasing, the other for getting: some by lawful means, but immoderately used, others right or wrong. But that is instead of God to them, 1 John ii. 15; and therefore it is called idolatry, Col. iii. 5.

2. Sensuality. There is in the world the lust of the flesh, the pleasures of sense, and carnal appetite; and there many an unrenewed heart has its secret haunt, that it can by no means be kept out of. There may be many good things about them; but their running issue there can never be stopt. The pleasures of sense are better to them, than all the pleasures of communion with God; and they are instead of it to them, 2 Tim. iii. 4, 5. Hence some are voluptuous epicures, whose belly is their god; some fleshly slaves, abandoned to, and wholly in the power of their fleshly lusts.

2*dly*, Or in the desires of the mind, Eph. ii. 3. There is in the world the pride of life too; and there the more refined part of the unregenerate world do nestle. And here are several things that will be found reigning sins of the unregenerate, the haunts of their unrenewed hearts.

1. Reigning pride and self-conceit, 2 Tim. iii. 2. Having never had a kindly work of humiliation wrought on them, the natural height of their spirit is unbroken. If they have any natural or acquired excellencies about them, they admire themselves in these, and take it very ill if others do not do so too. If they happen to obtain any religious or moral excellences, their case then becomes most hopeless, that publicans and harlots enter into the kingdom of heaven before them: for their unrenewed hearts have no ballast for that sail.

2. Bitterness of spirit, showing itself in malice and revenge against those they think have injured them. The unregenerate world is the region of malice and bitterness, as peopled by the seed of the serpent, Tit. iii. 3, "For we ourselves also, (saith the apostle Paul,) were sometimes foolish,—living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another." This temper of spirit is more the nature of the unregenerate than generally we are aware of. The contrary disposition is the badge of the family of God, Matt. v. 44, 45. "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven, for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." An unforgiving disposition is a sign of an unforgiven state, Matth. vi. 14,

15. Therefore there were none more spiteful and malicious than the Pharisees, because there were none farther from a state of pardon with God. When grace comes, it turns lions into lambs, Isa. xi. 6; and has a benign influence to the good of mankind, Rom. xiii. 10.

3. Reigning vanity of mind, Eph. iv. 17. All the unregenerate world having left God, follow after vanity; for there is no mids, 1 Sam. xii. 21. They are all in the dark, groping here and there for rest to their hearts among the creatures; they find it not, but a thousand disappointments cause them not to give over. They are like a sick man on his bed, turning every where for ease, and tossing; only never turning to God in Christ. The sick heart has this and the other fair promise made to it, to give it ease; for that end the world makes a mighty stir about meat, clothes, building, planting, doing and undoing again, turning upside down, changing and tacking about; and all in vain, without finding rest.

4. Natural enmity against God, Rom. viii. 7. The unregenerate world is, in the language of the Holy Ghost, a generation of vipers, Matth. iii. 7. And the seed of the serpent have all their venomous nature unchanged in them, whatever shapes or form of religion, or morality has cast them into. And this their natural enmity against God appears in two things.

(1.) A reigning enmity against the power of godliness, wherever it appears, Acts xiii. 10. Unrenewed professors of religion may very well like religion of the stamp of their own, and may have as much zeal as could burn up others that are not of their way; but to heaven shall hell be as soon reconciled, as they to real godliness in the power thereof, as it expresseth the image of Christ. And therefore there are none more virulent against the most serious godly than they, against those whose life is likest Christ's on earth.

(2.) An irreconcilable enmity to the law, and the holiness it requires, Rom. viii. 7. The image of God was most lively expressed on the man Christ, and in his holy life when on earth the world saw it; and it no sooner appeared, than the natural enmity of the unregenerate world appeared against God, in the treatment they gave to him, until they had him persecuted to the death. Now the most lively expression of the image of God, to be seen on earth, is in the holy law; but darkness and light may as soon be reconciled, as the unregenerate heart to the law. This appears, if ye consider,

(1.) There is never an unrenewed heart for the whole law, but at most to pick and chuse in it. Their shoulders can never away with the whole yoke of Christ. Seek all the unregenerate world, ye shall no sooner find one that is for fulfilling all God's will, than one after

God's own heart, Acts xiii. 22. Some or other of his commands are always grievous to them, and that they can by no means bear.

(2.) The law brought close home to the unregenerate has an irritating power on them, Rom. viii. 9. The more they are girded with the holy commandment, the more they sting against it; the closer it is applied to them, the farther they flee from it. It is like the stirring of the ant's nest, and the fretting of the serpent, that causes it spit its venom. Hence the more means of grace many have, they are the more vile; as the more the sun beats on the dunghill, its stench is the greater.

(3.) Akin to this is the enmity of the world against the ministers of Christ, which all ages and places have given pregnant instances of. The true reason of it is their office, an office ungrateful to the world, to declare the laws of Heaven, John xv. 20, 21. "Remember that word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me." Hence the current of spite against them, as against stewards who are to execute in a family the orders of the head thereof which are very unacceptable. Thus men being touched in their sore places, are irritated; yea, if providence frown upon men, their ill nature is ready to appear against them; because the unhumbled heart frets against the Lord, and so it rebounds on his servants standing in that relation to him.

5. Selfishness, 2 Tim. iii. 2. Men shall be lovers of their own selves. It is among the first lessons Christ puts in the hands of his scholars, to deny themselves; importing that all unregenerate men are overgrown with selfishness. Man falling off from God, set up himself as his chief end; and hence comes no due concern for the honour of God, nor for the good of others; but all swallowed up in concern for themselves; driving forward to that end over both the one and the other. Now grace corrects this disposition, bringing men out of the circle of self in which they were confined. This selfishness appears.

(1.) In their worldly management, where it swallows up neighbour-love, as in a devouring gulf, Phil. ii. 20, 21. Hence no due sympathy with the afflicted, their sorrows no allay to their joys; yea a secret satisfaction in the crosses, losses, and afflictions of others, that the sorrows of others are matter of joy and triumph to them, Prov. xxiv. 17, 18. Envying and grudging at the prosperity of others, undermining them in their affairs, not standing to drive on their own interest on the ruin of their neighbours; a scandalous cruel practice, which God is this day visibly contending for.

(2.) In their religious management, where it swallows up the love of God in Christ, like a devouring gulf, Phil. ii. 21. Hence no due concern for the honour of God in the world, no mourning for the sins of others, but a careless Gallio-like temper whether the interests of religion sink or swim. No rejoicing in the glorifying of God, where they themselves cannot pretend to a share; an ill eye on the good of others, and hardly a good word to spare for it, but a readiness to detract from it and sully it, unless they be of their party and way; in that case they find room for it, because there is room for self there, Phil. i. 15—18.

6. *Lastly*, Unbelief. This is the common sin of all the unregenerate world (John iii. 18, 19.) that hear the gospel. They may escape a mire of pollution, that others fall into, who are yet sunk over head and ears here. It is a sin that is the need-nail to all others, John vii. 24. and yet such a spiritual sin, that it is hardly discerned; it not being of the nature of those sins that a natural conscience boggles at. But all the unregenerate live in it.

(1.) They do not truly believe the gospel, Isa. liii. 1. There is a report sent from another world, of life and salvation for sinners through Christ; they do not contradict, they say they believe it, nay they think they believe it; but in reality they believe it not. For to quit the enjoyment of their lusts, and the pursuit of the vain world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, is in their eyes to quit certainty for uncertain hope. Any faith they have of it is but superficial; for it is risen without the root of saving illumination, and the demonstration of the Spirit, 1 Cor. ii. 4, 5. Matth. xvi. 17.

(2.) They have never been brought freely away to Christ, in the way of believing, for all, John i. 12, 13. All the proposals of the gospel made to them, have never prevailed farther than to make them almost Christians, they have not felt the day of power to make them willing, Psal. cx. 3. Men have drawn them, conscience has pressed them; but they have not felt the Father's drawing yet. Two things evince this.

(1.) They are not yet come freely away out of themselves, to Christ, for a rest to their consciences, Phil. iii. 3. They have never yet died to the law, and therefore cannot be married to Christ, Rom. vii. 4. They are not poor in spirit, Matth. v. 3. There is something left them still of their own, which though they cannot trust to before God for altogether, yet they can in part. They are never brought freely out of their own righteousness, Rom. x. 3.

(2.) They are not come freely away from the creature into Christ, for a rest to their hearts, Heb. iv. 3. They have never seen the

fulness in Christ, that he should be the one thing desired by them; but in their way Christ may bear the weight somewhat for a rest to their consciences, but the heart can have no rest but in the creature; for they say, as Isa. iv. 1, "We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel; only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach." He is not the one pearl to them, for which all is to be sold.

(3.) They do not live by faith, which is the only true Christian life, Gal. ii. 20. So far from it, that,

(1.) Sense, and not faith, is their guide in their way, quite contrary to the Christian course, 2 Cor. v. 7. "We walk by faith, not by sight." The constant cry of the unregenerate world is, "Who will shew us any good?" Psal. iv. 6. and nothing is good in their eyes but sensible good. So the things that are seen, and present, are valued and pursued; things that are not seen, and future, are slighted as uncertain.

(2.) Self, and not Christ, is what they lean to for carrying them on their way. The life of faith is a leaning on Christ, Cant. viii. 5. But instead of that, the unregenerate lean on their own stock, their self-wisdom for management, their self-strength for performance, and their self-worth for acceptance.

Thus it appears, that they still live in the allowed practice of some sin or other. Now,

1. The effect thereof is, that that one thing mars all to them, in point of acceptance; and keeps them in a state of death, Mark x. 21. While one sin is allowedly kept, no good they do can be accepted of God, Psal. lxvi. 18. It is as poison poured into a cup, which goes through all. And it effectually concludes them in a state of death; for an offending right eye or right hand puts the whole body in hazard of perishing, Matth. v. 29, 30. One leak may sink the ship. Abimelech the son of Gideon's concubine, slew his seventy brethren the sons of the wives.

2. The reason hereof is, that one sin is kept in the allowed practice thereof, evidenceth that any good done by such a one, is not done out of love to God, and regard to his holy law, but from some self end. For if the authority of God upon any command were sufficient to recommend the obedience of it to a man, it would recommend all the commands to him, because all bear the same impress of divine authority, James ii. 10, 11.

FOURTHLY, The whole unregenerate world lies under the guilt of sin, the guilt of revenging wrath, Rom. iii. 19. Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may

become guilty before God. By the sanction of the law, guilt follows sin; the creature sinning becomes liable to wrath; there is a bond wreathed about their neck, by which they may be drawn to suffer. Hence sin is called a debt, because as it is the taking away of obedience due, it binds to suffer punishment accordingly. That we may have a view of their state under the guilt of sin, consider,

1. It is the guilt of eternal wrath they lie under, being bound over thereto by the curse, Gal. iii. 10. The regenerate may be under guilt too; but it is only the guilt of fatherly anger; there is no curse, no revenging wrath in their case, Rom. viii. 1. But the unregenerate are under a bond of guilt binding them to suffer in hell to the complete satisfaction of justice.

2. The guilt of their original sin they were born with, is still lying on them, Eph. ii. 3.—And were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. They came into the world condemned men; and not being in Christ, the sentence is never reversed, though the execution is delayed. They have not the king's pardon, though they are yet spared, and easy as if there were no quarrel.

3. Every actual transgression, in heart, lip, or life, by omission, or commission, brings on new guilt of that kind on them, Gal. iii. 10. "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." So the guilt of their sins is added to the guilt of their original sin; and as many actual sins as they are chargeable with, so many pliars there are of that cord of death on them. As they repeat their sins, the law repeats its curse.

4. An unregenerate man can do nothing but what is sin, Matth. vii. 18. Accordingly God testifies of them that there is none that doeth good, no not one, Rom. iii. 12. His nature being wholly corrupt, all his actions are corrupt too; his natural actions, Zech. vii. 6. his civil actions, Prov. xxi. 4. and his religious actions, Prov. xv. 8. So that in all they do, they contract new guilt, Hag. ii. 14.

5. Man is a busy creature, still doing. And none are more busy than the unregenerate that can do no good, Isa. lvii. 20. "The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt." The heart of man is like the watch, that may go as fast going wrong, as when going right: it is still employed about vanity or vileness; and every imagination is evil, Gen. vi. 5.

6. *Lastly*, All their guilt sticks with them, nothing of it goes off, being out of Christ, Eph. ii. 1. Believers are daily contracting guilt, it is true; but then they are daily getting it removed too, through daily application of the blood of Christ by faith, as the liv-

ing man is putting off nastiness from him; whereas all abides with the unregenerate world, as the vermin on the dead corpse that can put off none.

Now put all these together, and what a dreadful lair has the unregenerate world in the guilt of sin! Floods of guilt are still rolling in on them, as the waters are running continually into the sea; but whereas the sea lets out of its waters that it receives in, they keep all the floods of guilt that roll in on them. So the longer they live, they are the more miserable, because the more guilty.

LASTLY, The whole unregenerate world lies in the filth and pollution of sin, Tit. i. 15. Unto them that are defiled and unbelieving, is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled. Sin is a defiling evil, it pollutes the sinner in the sight of God, defacing his image in the soul, and rendering him unlike God. God is glorious in holiness, this holiness he has expressed in his law, and sin is the quite contrary of that holiness. So that God can no more cease to abominate it, than to delight in his own image, Hab. i. 13; Jer. xliv. 4.

1. Their natural defilement and pollution which they were born in, still remains, Psal. li. 5. for they are not born again of the water and the Spirit. An emblem of their case ye have in Ezek. xvi. The whole soul of their frame is unclean, polluted, and unlike God, Tit. i. 15.

2. Every actual transgression, or omission, or commission, leaves a new stroke of pollution on them, rendering them more unlike God, Rom. iii. 13. So that their spiritual uncleanness is ever increasing, and the longer they live, they do but contract the more defilement.

3. *Lastly*, All sticks on them, nothing of their old or new defilement is removed; because they were never washed in the laver of regeneration, Ezek. xxii. 24. And what a wretched case must that be, where new filth is still coming on the soul, but none going off?

II. I shall now shew how the unregenerate world lies in wickedness. They lie in it in the most hopeless case; which we may take up in three things. They lie,

1. Bound in it, Acts viii. bound in it like prisoners, Isa. lxi. 1. They are in chains of guilt, which they cannot break off; there are fetters of strong lusts upon them, which hold them fast. Satan has overcome them, and brought them into bondage; and though they see their case is wrong, though a natural conscience witnesseth their hazard; yet they cannot leave it, but go on like an ox to the slaughter, and a fool to the correction of the stocks.

2. Asleep in it, Eph. v. 14. They have drunk of the intoxicating cup, and are fast asleep, though within the sea mark of vengeance.

Though some times they are made to start in their sleep, by passing convictions like a stitch in the side; yet there is no awakening of them, by all the alarms they get from the word, from providence, and their own conscience. If they are at any time moved by these, yet they quickly fall over asleep again.

3. *Lastly*, Dead in it, Eph. ii. 1. A natural life, through the union of a soul with their body, they have; but their spiritual life is gone, the union of their souls with God being quite broken, Eph. iv. 18. The image of God on the soul, the principal of vital holy actions, is away from them; so they lie in wickedness, breathless and motionless, ready to be buried out of God's sight.

The Doctrine of the Unregenerate world lying in Wickedness, applied.

USE I. Of information. See here,

First, The spring and fountain of the abounding sin in our day: The whole world lies in wickedness; and wickedness proceedeth from the wicked, 1 Sam. xxiv. 13. What but wickedness can be expected in a wicked world? The unregenerate bear the far greater bulk in the land, as in the world; and they are lying in wickedness. Here then is the opened fountain of the great deep, that has brought on a deluge of wickedness. Hence,

1. The apostacy in principles, men departing from the faith, and bringing in damnable heresies. The infidelity of this generation has gone to a monstrous height; contempt of revealed religion has fearfully spread. The doctrine of the grace of Christ is despised; and the doctrine of the person of Christ is rudely attacked; the foundations that were left in safety in the time of Prelacy, yea under Popery, are now overturned.* So has the wickedness of the world lying in wickedness broke out in our day.

2. Apostacy in practice. There is a deluge of profanity gone over the land; men have loosed the bridle to their lusts, opened the sluice to their wickedness, and there is no stopping of it by men's endeavours, Psal. cxix. 126. "It is time for thee, Lord, to work; for they have made void thy law." All ranks have corrupted their ways in church and state; that they are like to wear out serious godliness, and the saints of the Most High. And the generation is remarkably worse than their father's, more loose, and regardless of all that is good.

Secondly, The spring of all the miseries that are lying on us, and we are threatened with. The world is lying in wickedness, and there-

* The author refers to the revival of Arianism in England by Doctor Clarke, and in Scotland by Professor Simpson.

fore lies in misery; for God is a sin-hating and sin-revenging God. It is the sin and wickedness of the generation, that has brought on the decay of trade, and is impoverishing the country, for a witness against the misimprovement of a thriving condition. To that is owing the present straitness, and diminishing of our ordinary food; for the abuse of fulness in luxury, sensuality, and lasciviousness; the desolating of the flocks, for men's oppressing one another; the great sickness and death in families wherewith the Lord is afflicting us. And these look but like the beginning of sorrows, for there is no turning to the hand that smiteth.

Let not men harden themselves in the case, because it seems to fare as ill with saints as sinners. For,

1. It is God's ordinary way in his proceedings against a land, to begin with his own house and family, Ezek. ix. 6. For though they are not of, yet they are in the world, and contract infection, so that with them also there are sins against the Lord. And because the Lord has a kindness for them, they get the brim of the cup, Zech. i. 11, 12.

2. But it is a sign for ill to the world lying in wickedness. And of a long time we have had that sign, of particular strokes directed against those that are the most serious, 1 Pet. iv. 17, 18. For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God; and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? and if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? If God's own people drink of the cup of judgment, the world lying in wickedness shall pledge them, and drink after, Jer. xxv. 27, 29. And the former getting the brim, the dregs will fall to the latter, Psal. lxxv. 8. And thus God's own prophets have been signs to a people with whom God had a controversy, Ezek. xxiv. Thus Ezekiel is unto you a sign; according to all that he hath done, shall ye do; and when this cometh, ye shall know that I am the Lord.

3. *Lastly*, Though in the outward course of providence all falls alike to all, yet the cross of the saint is better than the crown of the sinner, Isa. liii. 10, 11. "Say ye to the righteous that it shall be well with them, for they shall eat the fruit of their doings. Wo unto the wicked, it shall be ill with him; for the reward of his hands shall be given him," Rom. viii. 28. "And we know that all things work together for good, to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose," Prov. i. 32. "The prosperity of fools shall destroy them."

Thirdly, It is not strange to find men of the world lying in the habitual practice of some abomination; for the whole world lieth in

wickedness. Men will carry themselves agreeable to their state of regeneracy or irregeneracy; and to find unregenerate men lying in this and the other wickedness, is no more strange than to find fish swimming in the water, and birds flying in the air; it is their element.

1. Accordingly some lie in open wickedness, declaring their sin as Sodom, Isa. liii. 9. For where men cannot restrain them, they are at liberty, because they have no fear of God before their eyes. Their lust is their law in these things, and they go so far in the road as their feet will carry them, doing evil as they may or can.

2. Some lie in some secret wickedness, which they get kept secret from the open view of the world, and for the eye of a jealous God that mars them not, Ezek. viii. 12. "Son of man, hast thou seen what the ancients of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the chambers of his imagery? for they say, The Lord seeth us not, the Lord hath forsaken the earth." This evil world has a loathsome aspect as it is, for all the covering of abominations in it; but were the secret abominations in it brought out to men's knowledge, the secret frauds and cheats, whoredoms, adulteries, and lasciviousness, murders, thefts, &c. set in the light, how much more loathsome would the world appear? Eph. v. 12. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret. But two things are certain,

(1.) Where the fountain of sin is not stopt by regenerating grace, it must needs have its main stream running in the practice of some one wickedness or other, Rom. vi. 12. An unregenerate man's predominant sin may indeed be changed; but he shall sooner cease to breathe, than to have some one running issue or other. And that will always be his neckbreak here, that will part betwixt Christ and him, Mark x. 21, 22; and that will be the most terrible gnawing worm in the conscience hereafter.

(2.) Whether it be an open or secret wickedness, it will be called at length before a tribunal, where there will be no shifting of compearance, defeating of probation, nor stopping execution, Acts xvii. 31. "He hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained." Rom. xiv. 10. "We shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ." There the most secret pieces of wickedness shall be discovered before all the world, Eccl. xii. ult. "For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil. Prov. xxvi. 26, "Whose hatred is covered with deceit, his wickedness shall be shewed before the whole congregation." And the most daring transgressor shall be made to stand trembling, Eccl. xi. 9. "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and

let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thy heart, and in the sight of thine eyes; but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment."

Fourthly, The world must be an infectious society; it must be a pestilential air that is breathed in it, and wickedness in it must be of a growing and spreading nature. For the whole world lieth in wickedness. Hence,

1. Unregenerate men, if they get not a cast of saving grace to change their nature, will undoubtedly grow worse and worse, 2 Tim. iii. 13. As that which lies in the dunghill, rots the more the longer it lies; so men lying in irregeneracy, in wickedness, the longer they live their case is the more hopeless. How evidently is this seen, in there being some hope of some while they are yet young, yet not being converted then, they grow at length to a pitch that there is no dealing with them?

2. Unregenerate men are snares and neckbreaks one to another, serving to advance the growth of wickedness in one another, Matth. xviii. 7. As in a dunghill one part serves to rot another, so is it in the world lying in wickedness. The ill example of some encourages others, and so the elder corrupt the younger, especially when they go about to train them up in the ways of wickedness.

3. They are snares even to the godly. It is hard to come near a mire or dunghill and not be defiled. There was a suffocating vapour arose from the high priest's hall, that made Peter fall a denying his Master. This made the Psalmist say, "Wo is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar," Psal. cxx. 5.

Hence we may learn,

(1.) They have a hard task in hand, whose business it is to deal with the world lying in wickedness, in order to their reformation; for the longer they lie in their wickedness they are the more strengthened in it, their hearts are the more hardened, their consciences more seared, and the bands of wickedness grow stronger. And then one helps another in an ill course, they unite and combine to strengthen one another in wickedness. So that it is a heavy task.

(2.) The danger of ill company, 1 Cor. xv. 32. "Evil communications corrupt good manners." The wicked world is a dangerous society, and has been ruining to many. How many have been ruined, by their being educated and living amongst those of the world lying in wickedness, never having an opportunity of good company, where they might see or get good? How many have been ruined by their falling into ill company, after hopeful beginnings? The stream of our nature runs the wrong way, so the world lying in wickedness

rows with the stream, and so is successful in working sinners' ruin, Prov. xiii. 20. "He that walketh with wise men, shall be wise; but a companion of fools shall be destroyed."

Fifthly, This accounts for the uneasy life that the serious-godly have in the world. The whole world lieth in wickedness. Our Lord Jesus had an uneasy life in it, and so will all his followers have to the end. The church in the world is like a lily among thorns; however the world may caress its own, the serious-godly will not get leave to forget that they are from home while in it; strangers and pilgrims; that they are in a wilderness. How can their life in it miss to be uneasy? For unto them,

1. It is a loathsome world, where their eyes must behold abominations that they cannot help, Hab. i. 3. "Why dost thou shew me iniquity, and cause me to behold grievance? for spoiling and violence are before me; and there are that raise up strife and contention." However the swine of this world may delight to wallow in their own mire, and to lie in their own dunghill; yet to heaven-born souls, the stench arising from that dunghill must needs be noisesome. Hence says the prophet, Jer. ix. 2. "Oh, that I had in the wilderness a lodging-place of way-faring men, that I might leave my people, and go from them; for they be all adulterers, an assembly of treacherous men."

2. It is a vexatious world; the temper of the parties is so different, so opposite, that they can never hit it, but must needs be heavy one to another. As the way of the godly is uneasy to the world, so the way of the world is uneasy to them, makes them many a sorrowful day and heavy heart, and draws many a sigh and groan from them, as in Lot's case, 2 Pet. ii. 7, 8. And the uneasiness arising from that quarter makes heaven more desirable, as to burdened men groaning.

3. It is an ensnaring world, wherein snares of all sorts are going, and they are many times catched in the trap ere they are aware, 2 Tim. iii. 1, 2. This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, &c. The world lying in wickedness lays snares for them, that by drawing them into their courses, they may make them like themselves. And at all times they are in hazard by them, either by omission of necessary duty, or commission of sin.

4. It is a world wherein wickedness thrives apace as in its native soil, but any good has much ado to get up its head, Jer. iv. 22. "For my people is foolish, they have not known me, they are sottish children, and they have none understanding; they are wise to

do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge." The ground being cursed, thistles and thorns grow up of their own accord; but after much labour for the seed-corn, the husbandman has but a sorry increase. So the work of wickedness goes on with speed; but O how hard is it to make a good work take! The most prudent management can hardly carry a good work, but one sinner destroyeth much good, Eccl. ix. ult.

Sixthly, This accounts for the frightful end this visible world will make, by the general conflagration, 2 Pet. iii. 10. There is a curse on it, for the wickedness in it, that once deluged it, it will in the end burn it up. It has been a stage of wickedness, and will be pulled down; a sink of abominations, and will be overthrown. The creatures groan in it, under the abuse of them to the serving of the lusts of men; they must be delivered.

Lastly, This shews the dangerous state of the unregenerate world; they lie in wickedness. Therefore,

1. They now lie under wrath, hanging in the threatening and curse which is over their heads, Eph. ii. 8. Being in the region of wickedness, it is the region of wrath, John iii. ult. They are in a state of wrath, it is on them and theirs.

2. They will perish under that wrath, whoever continue and come not out from among them. For the world now lying in wickedness, will sink down into the pit, and lie eternally under their guilt and filth, Matth. xxv. ult. Rev. xx. 14, 15.

Use II. Of exhortation.

1. To all I would say, Search and try what society ye belong to, whether ye are still of, or separated from, the world lying in wickedness. It is certain, we are all naturally of the world; there is no coming out of it, but by regenerating grace; and being come, ye will have taken another route. What has been already said, particularly on the first clause of the verse, touching the marks and characters of those that are of God, and so separated from the world, may serve to discover your state in this point.

2. To saints separated from the world, I would say,

(1.) Do not much wonder at the harsh entertainment ye meet with in it. Value not the frowns of the world lying in wickedness; and think not strange of frowns of providence on you while ye are in it. For it will never be quite well with the family of God, while they are here in the same place with the world.

(2.) Watch against it while ye are in it, as being in hazard of sins and snares in a world lying in wickedness. Be not secure; knowing that your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour, 1 Pet. v. 8.

(3.) Look homeward, and long to be with Christ; where you shall be for ever out of the reach of all evil, and enjoy such peace and freedom as your enemies can disturb no more.

3. *Lastly*, To sinners of the world lying in wickedness, I would say, Come out from among them, and be separated, as ye would not be ruined with them, and perish eternally in their destruction. But of this in the next discourse.

THE DIVINE CALL TO SINNERS TO COME OUT FROM AMONG THE WORLD LYING IN WICKEDNESS, EXPLAINED AND URGED.

Several Sermons preached at Ettrick, in 1729.

---

1 JOHN v. 19.

The whole world lieth in wickedness.

2 Cor. vi. 17.

Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.

YE have had a frightful description of the world lying in wickedness. We come now to press the exhortation to come out of it, in the words of this compared text. In which we have,

1. The gospel-call to sinners, *Come out from among them.* For whereas the words are taken out of Isa. lii. 11. it is plain the prophet there speaks of the days and preaching of the gospel, though with an eye to the deliverance from Babylon, ver. 7—10. In it we have,

(1.) The substance of the duty that sinners are called to, *Come out from among them*, viz. the world lying in wickedness, whereof Babylon was an emblem, as the Jews were of the elect. Babylon was the mother of abominations, and devoted to destruction; so the world lying in wickedness is. To come out from among them, is to come out of your natural state, unto Christ by faith; that is the only way to come out from among them. And that the text aims at no less, is evident,—that adoption into God's family is thereupon promised.

(2.) The touchstone of sincerity in it. *Be ye separate.* Right coming out from among the world lying in wickedness, is a coming out from among them freely and for altogether. A withdrawing for a time, the relation standing will not do; nor a halting between two;

there must be a total separation, by going quite to the other side, and setting up against them. Thus the apostle explains the double call to depart, Isa. liii. 11. Depart ye, depart ye, going still farther and farther from them, till the great gulf be fixed betwixt you and them.

(3.) A necessary direction for the right managing of your coming away,—Touch not the unclean thing. They are an unclean society, like a leprous person: consult not with them, but be resolute without tampering with them. Every thing among them is unclean; take up none of it to carry with you, as Rachel did her father's images. Be afraid of every person and thing in the world lying in wickedness, as of fire.

2. The gospel offer and promise, to be accomplished on complying with the call, I will receive you. I the Lord Christ will take you in. Be not afraid that ye shall be at any loss in the case; such refugees shall have the borders of the Lord's land, the gates of his house opened to them.

Now the doctrine of these texts thus compared, is,

Doct. There is a call from the Lord to sinners, to come out from among the world lying in wickedness, and leave them.

In handling this point, I shall,

I. Shew some things implied in it.

II. Shew what is the sinner's coming out from among the world lying in wickedness.

III. Consider the call from the Lord to come out from among them.

IV. *Lastly*, Apply the whole.

I. I shall shew some things implied in the doctrine. It implies,

1. The world lying in wickedness is a society hateful to the Lord, else he would not call to come out from among them. They may please themselves, as if they only were the people. The region of a natural state has the cloud of wrath abiding upon it, John iii. ult. They are a society whom God abhors as unclean: a people of God's indignation, as being his enemies; and against whom he will have war for ever that shall end in their destruction, or rather never end.

2. Sinners, ye are all by nature in among them, and of them; else, why is the call, Come out from among them? Whoever has not heard this call, and come out from among them in conversion, is among them yet, John viii. 44. I told you there are in the world lying in wickedness, the lower and the upper world; but both these make but one world, the devil is the head of both; and if a few years were gone, they will be both turned into one, and all the inhabitants housed under one roof, Matth. xxv. 41. Therefore unconverted sin-

ners are as sure among them as the damned.—Sinners, ye are children of hell, a prison-house, a dark house, a miserable house, Matth. xxiii. 15. As long as ye are among them, ye are like the house, and like the father of it: he is a fallen creature, lying in wickedness, his nature is enmity against God; so art thou and thine: and though thou put a fair face on, by a form of godliness: no marvel, for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light, 2 Cor. xi. 14.

3. Great is the danger of abiding among them, Isa. lii. 11. Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing, go ye out of the midst of her. There are three special emblems of the wretched world lying in wickedness, and the danger of abiding among them, to which this call may have reference. One is Babylon doomed to destruction, Psal. cxxxvii. 8. See the call to leave her, Jer. li. 6. Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver every man his soul; be not cut off in her iniquity; for this is the time of the Lord's vengeance; he will render unto her a recompence. Rev. xviii. 4. Come out of her my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. Another is Sodom, which fire from heaven was abiding the call Lot got to get out of it, ye have Gen. xix. 15. Arise,—lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city. It was set forth for an example Jude, 7. suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. A third is the tents of Dathan and Abiram, which were to be swallowed up of the earth. The call to the congregation to get up from about them, ye have Numb. xvi. 26. "Depart I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest ye be consumed in all their sins." Which is applied to gospel-hearers, 2 Tim. ii. 19. "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." Ye can have no more safe staying there than ye could have had in these, believe it or not.

4. It is possible ye may get away from among them. If ye were once down in the lower world lying in wickedness, it will be impossible ever to get out from among them more; this call has nothing ado with that part of them. But ye are yet in the upper world lying in wickedness, where Christ has his lower house, with a commission to fill it out of those of them that are lying there. And for this cause the call sounds in your ears this day. Psal. xlv. 10, "Forget thine own people, and thy father's house." Luke xiv. 23, "Compel them to come in, that my house may be filled." Come away before your feet slip,—ye may get away though never so far on.

5. God has some amongst them that shall not get leave to stay,

for he would never send out such a call altogether in vain. No; there is an elect number among them, on whom the call shall be effectual, sit it who will, 2 Tim. ii. 19. "The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his." Satan may get leave to keep a reprobate world, but the sheep of Christ, purchased with his blood, cannot be lost, John x. 16. "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice." There is a secret mark on some of the strayed, and they shall be made to come out from among the rest. Let this encourage you to come away, standing as fair as others to get help from heaven to make your escape.

6. Ye will be very welcome to Christ from among them, Psal. xlv. 10, 11. "Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house. So shall the King greatly desire thy beauty." They that come uncalled sit unserved; but ye need not fear, the Master calleth you. It is what you have his word on, "I will receive you." Do not say, "Alas, I need never think that Christ will receive me; for I have been a poor, worldly, carnal creature, savouring nothing but the world;" no, the call supposes that, that ye are among them. "But I am deep in wickedness;" yet welcome, if ye have even been among the very worst of them, come from among them, and welcome, 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10, 11.

7. Ye will not be carried away from amongst them against your will. No; if ye come not voluntarily upon your own feet, ye will get leave to stay and perish among them; Psal. cx. 3. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." Christ will have none but willing subjects, such as submit by choice, not by force. Compel them; but how? as men are compelled to a feast, by most earnest entreaties, importunity, *&c.* but not otherwise. They that will needs lie still in their wickedness with the world, they will get their will with a vengeance; they will not be forced from the society they chuse.

8. Ye will not be carried away sleeping from among them neither; ye must awake, hear the call, and set down your feet to make your escape. Some say, they can do nothing, they cannot convert themselves, and they hope for grace afterward. So they make soft their pillow, sleep securely, and will do nothing. But if ye were willing to come away from among the world lying in wickedness, ye would stretch out the withered hand, ye would try the lame leg, take the help of offered grace, and take no rest till ye were got away.

9. Ye need not expect their good will to the parting. The call is directed to you, without noticing them; for it is certain they will

never let you out from among them, as long as they are able to keep you. Therefore ye must be resolute and peremptory, Matth. xi. 12. "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." Hell's flatteries and threatenings will all be plied to keep you among them; but stop your ears, and look not behind you, as the angels enjoined Lot, when they had brought him out of Sodom, Gen. xiv. 17.

10. *Lastly*, Ye will be received of the Lord into the society of the clean and holy, Heb. xii. 22—24. One part of them is perfectly clean, as to the other their cleansing is begun, John xiii. 8; but all are but one family; the former the elder children, in the upper rooms; the latter the younger, in the lower rooms; the whole headed by Christ.

II. I come now to shew what is the sinner's coming out from among the world lying in wickedness.

Negatively, 1. It is not a sinner's going out of this world. That is brought about by death, whether we will or not; and they that die in the Lord, they are indeed absolutely separated from the world lying in wickedness. But they that die out of Christ, they are for ever thereby fixed in the world lying in wickedness. Since they are not come out from among them here, they are put in among them there, their souls gathered with the wicked in death, with whom they gathered themselves in life.

2. It is not a coming out from among the immoral part of the world lying in wickedness, and joining in with the professors of religion, in a visible church-state. For there is a moral and religious part too of the world lying in wickedness; and those that are of these parts are as sure among them, as the immoral are. In a word, nothing short of true conversion and a saving change, is a coming out from among them.

Positively, It is a spiritual, gracious motion of the soul unto Jesus Christ, and is the very same with effectual calling, which is the work of the Spirit of Christ on these ordained to eternal life. We may take it up in these four steps,

First, The sinner's coming to a true sense of his own state and case among them; and this he is brought to in a work of conviction, John xvi. 18. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. Those of the world lying in wickedness are under spiritual blindness, they know neither what they are, nor where they are in very deed; and one must be brought to himself, before he come out from among them; otherwise he will not stir. Now the coming sinner,

1. He comes to be fully persuaded, that he is among them, and

out of the family of God, Luke xv. 17. He gets a dismal view of a natural state, of the case of the unregenerate world, of the world lying in wickedness; and he sees himself in the midst of them; so he is like one awaking out of a dream, and seeing himself beset about. So there are two things here,

1*st*, He gets a frightful view of the world lying in wickedness, as a society in most miserable case. The world lying in wickedness, that was in his eyes before like a paradise, a garden of pleasure, a sort of safety, appears in quite other colours, as a Babel of confusion, a wilderness of emptiness, a Sodom of wickedness, and tents of Dathan to be swallowed up. He sees it to be a society,

(1.) Lying in wickedness, under the guilt, pollution, and dominion of sin, contrary to God, and hateful unto him, Eph. ii. 12; a society abominable in the eyes of a holy God, however pleasant in the eyes of one another; wherein there neither is nor can be any thing good or acceptable in the sight of the great King.

(2.) Laid open to destruction from the presence of the Lord, Eph. ii. 12. He sees the curse lying on it, and binding it over to revenging wrath, and in virtue thereof certainly to be destroyed. The flaming sword appears, wherever he turns his eyes, ready to cut off the miserable inhabitants.

2*dly*, He gets a frightful view of his own case, as being among them, lying in wickedness, and lying open to destruction, Luke xv. 17. He sees his own sinfulness, is convinced of the sinfulness of his own life, heart, and nature; and sees his lost and undone case under the wrath of God, and curse of the law, Rom. vii. 9.

2. He comes to be fully persuaded, that there is no abiding for him among them, as Peter's hearers were, Acts ii. 37. and the Philippian jailor, Acts xvi. 30. He sees he is ruined for ever, if he get not away from among them. Time was when he could not think of parting from among them; but could get no rest among them; seeing every moment the city of destruction ready to be overthown, and himself to be swallowed up in the ruins.

This is a new sight, that one gets, not by the sight of the eyes, but from the word, by the Spirit acting as a Spirit of bondage on the soul and conscience; awakening, convincing, and persuading into a firm belief of the report of the law, with application to one's own particular case.

Secondly, The sinner's coming to see a better state and case for him, with Christ and his company, Luke xv. 17. If the convinced sinner did not see a refuge, where he might be in safety, he would sink in despair; but the Lord timely opens his eyes, as he did Hagar's to see the well, when the child was laid by for dead. And he sees,

1. Full safety for him there, if he could get in among them, Luke xv. 17. The soul gets a view of Christ in the transcendent glory of his person and office; sees him an able and sufficient Saviour, Heb. vii. 25. having a fulness of merit, for procuring him the pardon of his greatest and most numerous sins; and of Spirit, for sanctifying him, and subduing the strongest lusts.

2. Free access for him to get in among them, Jer. iii. 22. He beholds the gates of the city of refuge cast open to receive him, and hears the voice of the Lord crying to him to turn in thither, Zech. ix. 12. He believes Christ to be not only an able, but a willing Saviour, willing to receive him; otherwise he would never come away.

This sight is given by the Spirit, demonstrating the word of the gospel to the soul, 1 Cor. ii. 4, 5. He shews it convincingly to be the infallible word of the eternal God, and his word to the sinner in particular. He brightens the glass of the gospel, so that in it they clearly see the glory of the Lord Christ, which they never saw before. And here they discover in him,

(1.) A rest to their consciences, not to be got in the fiery region of the law, Heb. ix. 14. "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge your consciences from dead works to serve the living God?" The conscience stung with guilt cannot be quieted with an imperfect righteousness, that comes not up to the law demands of perfect obedience and satisfaction; but the gospel reveals Christ's righteousness, Rom. i. 17. a broad cover, that salve which applied makes a sick conscience hale, Isa. xxxiii. ult.

(2.) A rest to their hearts, not to be got in the barren region of the creation, Psal. lxxiii. 25. "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee." The soul being a spiritual substance immortal, can never rest fully in the enjoyment of temporal things; they are neither sufficient for it, nor certain. But in Christ there is a fulness, and that is inexhaustible; and so the man sees him as commensurable to the desires of the soul.

THIRDLY, The sinner's coming to be willing to come out from among the world, and to come in to Christ and his company, Psal. cx. 3. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." Sinners naturally are unwilling to come away out of the world lying in wickedness, and to come to Christ; it is as much against the grain with them, as for the fishes to come out of the water to dry land. They like their master, their work, and their company there; they would never leave them, if they could but see how to put up with them. They have a heart aversion and enmity to Christ, and his

company, his way, and his law. But the Spirit makes them willing, renewing their will, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. And they become,

1. Rationally and deliberately willing to come out from among them, the soul being moved thereto with the greatest reason. A drawing there is in the case, but no force, only strong persuasion, Gen. ix. 27. It is no blind impulse brings men to Christ; it is no rash and inconsiderate adventure, but the cost is counted ere this building is begun. Where it is otherwise, men soon shew that they are still among them, for all the bustle they seemed to make to be away.

2. They are absolutely willing, content on any terms, as Paul was, Acts ix. 6. "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Many could be willing on such and such terms, if they could get leave to pick and chuse, if it were that such a particular lust only might be spared, if as to such a duty they might be excused; but they that are willing indeed are absolutely willing, willing at any rate.

3. They are willing for the present, nothing else answers the gospel-call, Heb. iv. 7. "To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." Felix was willing, but for an after time, not for the present; so many young sinners are willing to come out from among the world lying in wickedness, if once they were past their youth, and come of age; and the aged, if they were come to a death-bed. But the coming sinner is willing to come out from among them this moment.

4. *Lastly*, They are peremptorily willing: it is not a thing only they are willing to do, but they are peremptory they will do it. They are not only content to leave them, but they may not, dare not, will not stay longer with them, cost what it will. They are willing, as the slayer, to be in the city of refuge; for, by their conviction and saving illumination, they see there is safety there, and nowhere else.

FOURTHLY, The last step is the sinner's joining himself to the Lord Jesus Christ, the head of the society opposite to the world lying in wickedness, Jer. l. 5. which implies two things.

1. An actual renouncing of the world lying in wickedness, and all that is therein, Job xxxiv. 32. "That which I see not, teach thou me; if I have done iniquity, I will do no more." He renounces his relation to that society, their work, their way and course, resolute to bid an eternal farewell thereto, and to stay no longer among them, come what will. Though a Red sea be before him, he knows not how to get through, he is peremptory not to return to Egypt.

2. A receiving and resting on Christ for all, John i. 12. "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of

God, even to them that believe on his name." They sell all to buy the field; part with all for the one pearl. Christ is held forth in the gospel as a full and satisfying portion, as a rest to the conscience, and a rest to the heart; and faith closes the eyes to all others, and takes him as such in the word of the gospel-offer, Psal. lxxii. 24.

Hereby the soul is knit to Christ, becomes a member of his mystical body, Eph. iii. 17. By this means there is a spiritual marriage betwixt Christ and the soul entered into; Christ becomes the believer's; and the believer his, only, wholly, and for ever, Cant. ii. 16. "My beloved is mine, and I am his." So they are one spirit with Christ, 1 Cor. vi. 17.

And thus the sinner is effectually out from among them, no more of their number, no more in their state and case; he is brought into another opposite society, whose communion is with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ. Though thereafter he is indeed in the world, yet he is no more of it; and though he is yet out of heaven, he is really of the family there.

III. I proceed to consider the call from the Lord to come out from among them. And,

1. The ground in law that it is founded on, is the eternal agreement of the glorious Trinity for man's salvation. The Lord Jesus Christ having undertaken to do and die for and instead of an elect world, and his merit being sufficient for the redemption of the whole world; the Father was so well pleased with his undertaking and performance, that he made him the ordinance of heaven for salvation to all that would believe; he gave him a kingdom to be raised out of the world lying in wickedness. And thereon the call is founded, Matt. xxii. 4. All things are ready, come unto the marriage.

2. This call was drawn up and recorded in the Bible, by the Holy Spirit, that it might not be only a call by word of mouth that passeth, but in writing that is permanent, which the called may have occasion to consult when they please, Isa. lv. 1. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price." The whole Bible is a declaration of this call, with promises to those that answer it, and threatenings against them that refuse it. So the truth and reality thereof is sealed by the blood of Christ, the blood of the testament.

3. It is given in the gospel by Jesus Christ, with the consent of his Father and Spirit. The Father has sent him to call sinners to come out from among the world lying in wickedness. The Spirit says, Come. A whole Trinity invites them to come away, not willing that the captive exiles should die in the pit, Ezek. xviiii. 23.

4. It is directed to men, sons of men, Prov. viii. 4. "Unto you, O men, I call and my voice is to the sons of men." It is not to fallen angels; they are left to lie still in their wickedness, without remedy, and to reckon for it at last. But it is addressed to the descendents of fallen Adam in this world, without exception of great, yea the greatest of sinners, Rev. xxii. 17. Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Isa. i. 18. "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Though they have continued never so long among them, and be never so signalized among them, they are welcome to come away from among them.

5. It was the Son of God in person, that first proclaimed this call, in paradise, Gen. iii. 15. Afterwards taking on our nature, and appearing in the world in our flesh, he spent the time of his public ministry in calling sinners to come out from among the world lying in wickedness, Heb. ii. 3. though they were but few that came away upon that his call, Isa. liii. 1.

6. He continues to call sinners thereto, by his messengers, the ministers of the gospel, that call them in his name, 2 Cor. v. 20. And this is our work to call you to come away out from among the world lying in wickedness. We are the voice, he is the caller, Luke x. 16. For even now when he is in heaven, he speaketh to you by us, Heb. xii. 25.

7. *Lastly*, It is in this world only the call takes place, Matth. xxviii. 18, 19. As for those who are gone into the other world, the call can reach them no more; they are prisoners without hope. But while ye are here, the call is to you, particularly in the public assemblies, Prov. i. 20, 21. "Wisdom crieth without, she uttereth her voice in the streets; she crieth in the chief places of concourse, in the openings of the gates; in the city she uttereth her words," &c.

I come now to the improvement of this subject.

Use I. Of information. This lets us see,

1. Where we are all by nature, even in the world lying in wickedness, being real members of that sinful and miserable society. This is our native country, we are all natives of the world lying in wickedness, by our first birth. It is only by conversion and the new birth, that we come out from among them, and are naturalized in the heavenly country. Think on this, ye young, or aged, strangers to a work of conversion; and know where ye are.

2. Ye cannot abide among them, but in rebellion against the call of God. By this gospel ye are summoned in the Lord's name to come out from among them; and if after that, ye take it on you to

stay, ye do it upon your peril, incurring the displeasure of Heaven, not only for your being among them, but your refusing to come out from among them.

3. The sin of gospel-hearers abiding among them, is fearfully aggravated, and therefore will be fearfully punished. Every new gospel-call is a new call from the Lord to you to come out from among them. How inexcusable will they then be, that give a deaf ear to them all? Matth. xi. 21, 22. "Wo unto thee, Chorazin, wo unto thee, Bethsaida; for if the mighty works which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment than for you."

4. *Lastly*, Ye will surely be welcome to Christ, coming out from among them; for he will never put away them whom he calls to him, John vi. 37. "Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." His call is not only your warrant to come, but as such it is an ensurance of your welcome, Mark x. 49. "And Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called; and they call the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise; he calleth thee."

USE II. Of exhortation. O sinners, seeing it is so, that the whole world lieth in wickedness, and there is a call from the Lord to sinners to come out from among them, hearken ye this day to the call, and come out from among them, all and every one of you.

This is a point of the greatest weight, and therefore I shall,

1. Branch out the exhortation more particularly, that ye may not be in the dark as to what ye are called to.

2. Address it to several sorts of sinners, that it may be the more closely brought home to the conscience.

3. Urge it with some motives, that so it may be pressed upon you.

4. Consider the hinderances or impediments that keep men from coming out from among the world lying in wickedness, that so they may be removed out of the way.

FIRST, To branch out the exhortation more particularly, I lay it before you in these four branches,

First, O sinner, believe it firmly, and consider it seriously, that the unregenerate, unconverted world is a sink of sin and wickedness, and doomed to destruction. This is infallible truth, 1 John v. 19. "The whole world lieth in wickedness." John iii. ult. "He that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." Matth. xviii. 3. "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." John iii. 3. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." If ye be not let into a view of this, to see that society

a most sinful and dangerous one, we will but beat the air in calling you to come out from among them. Open then the eyes of your minds, and see by the light of God's word, the state of the unconverted world. See,

1. The sinfulness of it, how they lie in their sin, original and actual, in the guilt of all their sins, in the pollution of them, under the dominion of sin, and in the practice of sin, doing nothing but what is sin, incapable to do any thing good or acceptable in God's sight. They are a Sodom for filthiness; they are a company of spiritual lepers, set out without the camp of the saints where the Lord dwelleth and walketh; of dead men, whose beauty, sense, and motion is gone, and on whose souls living lusts are preying, like so many worms on the carcase in the grave.

2. The misery of it; how they lie under the curse, Gal. iii. 10. with Rom. iii. 19. under the displeasure and wrath of God. A black cloud of wrath hangs over them continually, John iii. ult. It never clears; smiles of common providence they may have, whereby temporal mercies are laid on their hands, as victuals to the condemned man are carried into the prison till his execution: but one smile of special favour and love they never have, Psal. vii. 11, "God is angry with the wicked every day." Some drops of wrath still falling on them, sinking though silently into their souls; and the full shower and pouring out of the cloud is abiding them.

Secondly, Be convinced, O sinner, that thou art among them; that their case is thy case, and thy part and lot is among them; that thou art sinful and miserable with them. It is the ruin of many, that they do not see, and will not see, that they are among them; and therefore they cannot come out from among them, Rev. iii. 17, "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing: and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." Matth. ix. 12, "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick." Are there not many of you, who have never seen this to this day? But if ye have not seen it, either ye are sanctified from the womb, or that is a certain sign ye are among them still. And, O how many have seen themselves among them, that yet were never freely brought out from among them, but after some awakening have just lain down where they were among them before? But oh! open your eyes, young sinners, and old sinners, and see yourselves among them, before you see yourselves among them in the lower world, where there is no coming out.

Thirdly, Be convinced that you cannot safely abide one moment longer among them; see the rock hanging over your head, ready to

fall every moment, and to crush you to pieces; see the snares, fire, and brimstone, ready to be rained down on you in that state, Psal. xi. 6. Many think that it is not safe indeed to die among them, but that yet they may safely live a while longer among them. This ruins many, while delaying from time to time they are surprised into destruction.

Lastly, Make away speedily from among them by conversion into God in Christ, Ezek. xxxiii. 11, "Turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways." That is, believe and repent, so coming unto God by Christ. By faith we unite with Christ, the head of the opposite society, and so return unto God; and by repentance we return unto our duty. This is the coming out from among them we call you to.

SECONDLY, I would address this exhortation and call to several sorts of sinners among you. Come out from among them,

1. Ye that have all your days been at ease in the world lying in wickedness, never considering that ye were there, nor concerned how to get out from among them. Open your eyes at length, know your natural state; see yourselves children of hell, heirs of wrath; sleep no longer, but look about you, see your danger, and come away, Prov. vi. 9, "How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep?"

2. Ye that having once been awakened, have fallen asleep again, and look on that former fright as a dream. Know that the danger you sometime saw, was most real, and represented your true case; and it was through the slight of Satan, ye were brought to take the armies of heaven advancing against you, for the shadows of the mountains. Wherefore bestir yourselves again, take second thoughts, and come away.

3. Apostates and backsliders, who sometime were on the way coming out from among them, but have now turned back, and fallen afresh to the way of the world lying in wickedness. Your case is very dangerous, Heb. x. 38, "If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him." Remember Lot's wife, who was turned into a pillar of salt, for looking back to Sodom, after she had got out of it. But our Lord is giving you a new call, Jer. iii. 22, "Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings." Hearken to it, or ye are doubly ruined.

4. Ye that are halting betwixt two opinions, in a doubt whether to come out from among the world lying in wickedness, or not yet. Conscience is pressing you forward, corruption is pulling you back; you hear one voice or whisper, saying, To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts; another saying, Not yet, there will be time enough after. Know this last is the language from hell

among them; O heed it not, but come away as from fire that will burn you up.

5. Ye that have been often aiming at coming, but yet have never come away freely. O make a thorough separation from them at last; out with the right eye, off with the offending right hand. Let no beloved lust be spared; leave not a hoof behind you. It is sad to miss of the kingdom of heaven, when one is not far from it; to fall into the pit, from the threshold of heaven.

6. *Lastly*, All ye that have any mind for heaven, or the favour of God in time or eternity, come out from among the world lying in wickedness. All that have any concern for your own souls, and would not perish for ever. O set away from among them, nearer to Christ.

THIRDLY, Let me now urge the following motives to press the exhortation and call.

General motives. It is a most miserable case to be among the world lying in wickedness; the sight whereof is enough to frighten one. However secure sinners please themselves in being among them, yet never could one that was in a den of lions, inclosed among serpents or other venomous creatures, be more desirous to be from among them; than God's elect to be out of the world lying in wickedness, when once the Spirit has opened their eyes, Luke xv. 17, 18. Acts ii. 37. I would point out the misery of the case of being among them.

1. There is nothing pure or clean among them. Touch not the unclean thing; i. e. meddle with nothing that belongs to them; for they and all theirs are unclean, Tit. i. 15. There are souls and rational faculties among them, but they are all defiled and loathsome before God; there is no spiritual beauty or likeness to God among them. There are works they call good among them; but they are all vile and loathsome in the sight of God, Psal. xiv. 1. There are prayers and praises among them, but they are but like the opening an unripe grave, Rom. iii. 13. There are among them fair promises and engagements to duty, but they are but abominable deceit, ib. There is meddling with holy things among them, but see Isa. lxvi. 3. "He that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck," &c. For they cannot please God till they come out from the world lying in wickedness, Heb. xi. 6.

2. There is no spiritual health or soundness among them. We may say of them, as Isa. i. 6. "From the sole of the foot even unto the head, there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores; they have not been closed, neither bound up,

neither mollified with ointment." However little need they find of the Physician of souls, they are all sick, deadly sick, as unpardoned sinners; though most of them are delirious, and know not their sickness, Matth. iv. 12, 13. Isa. xxxiii. ult. Their plague-sores of sin are running on them continually; none of them want a running issue of some predominant lust, that can never be got stopt.

3. There is a deadly infection among them; so that to be among them is to be in a pest-house, where one draws in death with the disease prevailing among them, 1 Cor. xv. 33. Every one of them is a root of bitterness, which springing up is ready to defile many, Heb. xii. 15. Therefore Solomon observes, that one sinner destroyeth much good, Eccl. ix. ult. The stream of their ungodly example, and corrupt conversation, sickens some, and kills others outright; wounds the godly, and ruins those of their own sort.

4. There is nothing but darkness, gross darkness among them, for the Day-star is not yet arisen into their hearts, Isa. lx. 2. They sit in darkness and the shadow of death; they are darkness itself, Eph. v. 1. for they are blind souls, Rev. iii. 17. Though the light of the gospel shines about them, it hath not shined into their hearts; they think they see; for though they are void of the light of grace, they have the light of reason; but that is darkness in them, Matth. vi. 23. So they see not where they are, nor whither they go, 1 John ii. 11.

5. There is no part with Christ among them, Eph. ii. 12. There is a rich purchase made by the Mediator, and he has taken all believers into fellowship with him, 1 John i. 3; but the world has no share with them; no share in the righteousness, peace, pardon, and title to heaven. They share with the society of the first Adam, in their sin and misery; but not with the society of the second Adam. Hence they are unwashen, unjustified, and unsanctified.

6. There is nothing but rank poverty among them. Whatever wealth they may have for their bodies, in respect to their souls they are poor to an extremity, Rev. iii. 17. whereof there are three glaring evidences.

(1.) They are poor naked souls, ib. The best raiment among them to cover their spiritual nakedness, is rags, filthy rags, the rags of their own righteousness; they have nothing else to cover their shame before the Lord; and that will never do it, but leave them naked to their shame.

(2.) They are poor starving souls; there is nothing among them to feed on but empty husks, that which is not bread, and satisfieth not. Only Christ is bread for the soul, only a God in Christ can satisfy the cravings thereof. Dust is their meat with the serpent;

they feed on the empty husks of the creature, and so do but fill the belly with the east-wind.

(3.) They are drowned in debt to justice, and have nothing wherewith to pay. Sin is that debt, and there is no forgiving the debt, while one is among them, Acts iii. 19, "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." It is a debt that, however long it lie over, will be exacted; it will be pursued for, and that on the debtor's expence. And they have no saving interest in the great Cautioner.

7. There is no peace with God among them, 2 Cor. vi. 14—17. "What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial?" &c. Sooner shall light and darkness agree, than a holy God, and the world lying in wickedness. Nay, they are a society with whom God has declared that he will have war for ever, Is. lvii. ult. "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." Those in the lower world lying in wickedness, are roaring under the felt enmity of God against them; while those in the upper world lying in wickedness may be enjoying a profound peace. But the latter as well as the former stands as marks to the arrows of God's wrath, Deut. xxix. 19, 20. As long as thou art among them, thou art in a state of enmity with God, Rom. viii. 7. Luke xix. 27.

8. They have no sound bond of peace among themselves, Tit. iii. 3. God alone is the centre of true unity, and where men are broke off from God, they will be found at the bottom broke off from one another, as altogether selfish, and having their unruly passions unmortified, which make them uneasy both to themselves and others. And hence faith in Christ is the early restorer of true peace and love among men. That peace and love that is between companions in sin, will without peradventure break out in rage and hatred.

9. There is a curse among them, the curse of God and of his broken law, Gal. iii. 10. They are under the law, and it makes its way among them, Rom. iii. 19. This makes them a society of cursed children, cursed in their persons, and in all theirs. By this means they are a society separated to evil; and that curse will pull down the roof upon their heads at length, as it brought on the deluge, bringing in the general conflagration, and will lie a sinking weight on them for ever.

10. There is a cloud of wrath hanging over their head, and the head of every one among them, John iii. ult. While ye are among them, your state is a state of wrath; ye are ever under Heaven's displeasure, Psal. vii. 11. Ye dwell under mount Sinai, where the fire of wrath is flashing; and though sleeping there, ye are secure;

yet ye will no sooner be awakened, than ye will see the lightnings, hear the thunders, and the voice of the trumpet waxing louder and louder. Therefore I would say as Deut. i. 6. "Ye have dwelt long enough in this mount."

11. Death reigns among them, Matth. iv. 16. They are a company of condemned criminals, John iii. 18. that know not how soon their sentence may be executed. They are all in a dying condition, they have got their deaths wounds, and are pining away in their iniquity. Nay they are dead already, God is departed from them. O why will ye continue in the congregation of the dead? Come out from among them.

12. There is no good to be found among them, Psal. xiv. 1. They are corrupt trees, and cannot bring forth good fruit. There is nothing among them but sin: for there is no faith among them. What has the name of good hearts, good works is but so in appearance, not in reality; for what good can be there, where the nature is totally corrupt?

13. All evil is to be found among them. The unrenewed heart is a depth of wickedness; and in the world lying in wickedness all manner of wickedness is to be found. Much of it appears now, yet much is hid; but at length all will be seen.

14. *Lastly*, They are not to stay here, but will all be down in the lower world at length, Rev. xx. 14, 15. There are some dropping down to it daily, yet the rest remain secure; but all will be hurried down together to it at the last judgment. What a fearful cry was there at Dathan and Abiram's down going? Numb. xvi. 34. What then will the cry be, when the whole world lying in wickedness shall go down together? Therefore I say to you, as Numb. xvi. 26. "Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest ye be consumed in all their sins."

FOURTHLY, I shall now consider the impediments hindering men to come out from among the world lying in wickedness, and keeping them among them.

First, Want of consideration, Luke xv. 17. They ramble through the world, walking at adventures, and are not so just to their own souls as seriously to take under consideration their spiritual state and case. They seek not these thoughts; and if at any time they bear in themselves upon them, they shift them. Hence,

1. They have no just view of the corruption and danger of the world lying in wickedness. Though it is abominable in the eyes of God, it is a beauty in theirs; though it is a Sodom to be destroyed, they see nothing but safety, Mal. iii. 15. Why, they view it in a false light, they consider it not, as represented in the word, which alone can give a true notion of it.

2. They discern not themselves as true members of the world lying in wickedness. They form to themselves a notion of the wicked, whereby those only that are monsters of wickedness are reckoned of that sort; not considering, that all the unregenerate are of them in God's account, even though moral, or having a form of godliness. And though they be immoral, vicious, and profane, they think themselves not of the number, because there are some worse than they.

3. They see not the need of coming out from among the world lying in wickedness, Matth. ix. 12, 13. Their eyes being withheld from a sight of their own danger among them, how can they be moved to make an escape? Will a man flee that apprehends no pursuit? No; they will be secure, if not mockers.

Now, to remove this impediment, hearken to the divine call, Hag. i. 7. "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Consider your ways." Stand, sinner, young or old, and consider where you are, what you are doing, where your present course is like to land you in eternity. You can consider of the trifles of a present world, why not consider your soul's case, and the concerns of another world? Want of consideration allows present ease, but it lays a foundation for eternal pain. Careless souls now, will sink themselves into deep consideration through eternity, which makes the worm that never dies. Wherefore I give you three advices.

1. Take some time purposely for consideration of these matters; pray and think in earnest about them, Psal. cxix. 59. They are too weighty to be successfully managed by fleeting and occasional consideration.

2. Consider them according to the word of God, Psal. cxix. 9. Lay aside all other rules of judging, as the course of this world, the opinions of the men of this world, &c. and consider purely what the Bible says in the case; for it is not by the former, but the latter, you are to be judged, and sentenced.

3. Pursue this consideration, till you have discovered clearly your state as it is, according to the word. And be not loath to admit conviction; for to see the disease is the first step to the cure. And then you have gained that sight, when you see an absolute necessity of getting out from among them without delay.

Secondly, The pleasures of the world, Luke viii. 14. These are the Syren songs that arrest many, that they cannot come away from the world lying in wickedness. They are the silken cords by which they are tied down among them, as fast as by iron chains. These gripe them by the heart, so that remembering them, their very hearts fail to think of coming away from among them.

The pleasures of sense, seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, and

feeling, are ruining snares to the souls of most men. The lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life, keep many away from God, for men naturally are lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God, 2 Tim. iii. 4. Now the world lying in wickedness, giving up themselves to these, bless themselves in their enjoyment, and men cannot think of coming out from among them.

1. Unlawful pleasures bewitch them, as of drunkenness, gluttony, uncleanness, Prov. xxiii. ult.; Luke xvi. 19, 23; Prov. vii. 22, 23. There is a particular pleasure corrupt nature has in breaking over the hedge of the divine law, which makes forbidden fruit more pleasing than what is allowed, Prov. ix. 17, 18. They will therefore rather venture the eternal ruin of their souls, than come out from among them and forego these.

2. Even lawful pleasures fetter them, and lull them asleep among them, Luke xvii. 27. One may abide within the boundaries of lawful things, and yet have the heart so bewitched with them, that they may prove effectual snares. There is much of that which is counted innocent mirth and pleasure, and is so in itself, that yet becomes criminal, as taking the place of, and diverting from the main thing.

To break this snare, and remove this impediment, consider,

1. The pleasures of this world are deceitful; and as they are snares to the soul, they end in bitterness, Prov. xiv. 13. They are Satan's busked hooks, wherewith he first allures, and then ruins many a poor soul. They are his green and soft paths leading to destruction; and the pleasures of sin will be bitterness in the end, come what will.

2. This life is to us, not the time of pleasure, but the time of trial and probation for another world. Brute creatures enjoy the pleasures of sense they are capable of, more than the most voluptuous man doth; for these are the utmost of what they can obtain; and when they are dead, they are done. But God made man for a more refined sort of pleasure, in the enjoyment of himself. Man sinned and forfeited that, and God has proposed a new way for his recovering it, the way of faith. And now we are on our trials for it to be had in another world; and in denying ourselves to the pleasures of sin and sense, lies a great part of that trial, 2 Tim. ii. 3. Can ye expect two summers in one year; an easy, soft life of pleasure here, and hereafter too? Such expectation is in vain.

3. Consider the life of Christ and his saints, and the life of the wicked going to destruction. Which of them was it that had the life of worldly pleasure, immersed in the pleasures of sense, living at ease for the flesh? Was it the saints? No; Luke ix. 23, "If any man will come after me, says Christ, let him deny himself, and

take up his cross daily, and follow me." Was it Christ? No; Isa. liii. 3. "He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." Was it the wicked that had the life of pleasure? Yes; see Job xxi. 7—14, "Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea, are mighty in power? Their seed is established in their sight with them, and their offspring before their eyes. Their houses are safe from fear, neither is the rod of God upon them. Their bull gendereth and faileth not, their cow calveth, and casteth not her calf. They send forth their little ones like a flock, and their children dance. They take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ. They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave. Therefore they say unto God, Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways." Psal. lxxiii. 4—12. "For there are no bands in their death; but their strength is firm. They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men. Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain; violence covereth them as doth a garment. Their eyes stand out with fatness; they have more than heart could wish. They are corrupt, and speak wickedly concerning oppression; they speak loftily. They set their mouth against the heavens; and their tongue walketh through the earth. Therefore his people return hither; and waters of a full cup are wrung out to them. And they say, How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the Most High? Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world, they increase in riches." The decision is plainly made, Luke xvi. 25. in the case of the rich man and Lazarus; the former received his good things in his life time, and the latter evil things. The way of providence in that matter has been, that the slaughter-oxen have had the greatest ease, and been best fed.

4. The pleasures of sin and the world, put the mouth out of taste to the pleasures of communion with God, 1 Pet. ii. 11. By them the Spirit is quenched, and good motions heaven-wards are stifled. Therefore it is the Lord inures his people to hardness, because that makes them value the consolations of God, which the soft and delicious life would make them neglect.

5. *Lastly*, Were it not better to break these chains of worldly pleasures now and escape, than to remain in them, and lie down in sorrow for ever? Isa. l. ult. It was by the pleasures of sense that mankind was ruined at first, Gen. iii. 6; and for that the second Adam paid for the elect, in his bitter sufferings, when he was deprived of all that could be grateful to his senses and contrariwise was exposed to the wrath of God, and the rage of men and devils. That life will have a bitter reckoning in the other world, when men

are divested of their bodies till the last day, and then raised up for eternal punishment against that day.

Therefore I would advise you to leave these things in time, and to be resolute to break through that bond, Matth. v. 29. If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee, for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.

Thirdly, A prejudice against religion is a very unpleasant thing, Matth. xxv. 24. "Then he which had received one talent, came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not stawed." Mal. iii. 13. "Ye said also, Behold what a weariness is it, and ye have snuffed at it, saith the Lord of hosts." This is an impediment that stands in the way of many; they think that if they should come out from among the world lying in wickedness, they may for ever after bid farewell to all pleasure, to taste it no more; they must spend their days in sorrow, and never see a joyful hour more. This is what they can by no means do; and therefore come after what will, they must abide among them. But,

1. Suppose that were true of religion, whether is it easier to spend a life-time in a constant cloud of sorrow till death, or to spend an eternity so after death? If men had no view at all beyond death, it would be more tolerable for them to make the most pleasurable they could of a present life; but since there is a life of pleasure or torment in another world, it is most absurd for eviting of momentary sorrows and hardships, to throw themselves into endless misery.

2. But it is absolutely false, a rash, ill grounded prejudice, wherewith men are possessed against religion; and it is fostered by Satan, and the deluded world. It is contrary to the plain testimony of God in Christ, Prov. iii. 17. "Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." Matth. xi. 28—30. "Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." It is contrary to the experience of the saints in all ages, John viii. 56. "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it and was glad." Psal. iv. 7. "Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased." 1 John v. 3. "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not grievous." And it is contrary to the nature of things, which of themselves lead quite otherwise, Isa. lvii. 20, 21. "But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up

mire and dirt. There is no peace saith my God to the wicked." Compared with 2 Cor. i. 12, "Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you wards." But here lies your mistake.

(1.) You know and can conceive of no other pleasures, but those of the world, sense, and sin; but there is another kind of pleasure, that is spiritual, which religion affords, that none know but those who have tasted it, Prov. xiv. 10. There are rivers of pleasure in heaven, but your worldly pleasures are not there; and there are in religion pleasures of that kind, in the Lord's lifting up the light of his countenance upon his people, and putting gladness in their hearts, Psal. iv. 6, 7; in seeing one's name written in heaven, Luke x. 20; and in the approbation of conscience, 2 Cor. i. 12. It is your want of a new nature, that ye cannot relish these new, refined, undreggy pleasures.

(2.) You think all pleasures are noisy, like those of the revellers and jovial ones of the earth; but it is not so, Rev. ii. 17. "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it." The deepest waters run most still, and so do the deepest joys; hence even in worldly concerns, deep joy is not expressed by laughter, which is used only on trifling occasions. And of all joys and pleasures, those of religion lie most inward.

(3.) You form your notion of religion, by the outward appearance of some that profess it, who are of a heavy disposition. But you ought to form it by the scripture, and not by the appearance of some of its professors, from whence you may draw the most frightful notion of it; but the art of hell is in this, leading you from the view of cheerful Christians, to settle on those that are not so. But after all, ye may be deceived in them, for the countenance is not always an exact representer of what is within; witness the mirth and jollity of many, whose heart feels stings, and lashes in the time. But what notion have you formed of religion, from the appearance of the man Christ, who was a man of sorrows, of whose weeping you read sometimes, of his rejoicing once, but of his laughing never?

3. Consider, whether the way of religion, or the way of the world, affords the most ground for joy and pleasure? This will be no hard question to an impartial inquirer. The one is the way to a state of favour with God, peace, &c. here; the other keeps one under his wrath; the one is the way to be eternally happy, the other to be

eternally miserable. Wherefore bring ye no sorrow with you into religion, nor spring of it; and ye will find none in religion. But it teaches men to be sorrowful in time for what is just ground of sorrow, and will produce it sooner or later in all.

4. *Lastly*, The very sorrows that religion puts men to, are better than the world's joys and pleasures. These last are a spring of sorrow, and will end in it, Luke vi. 25. "Wo unto you that laugh now; for ye shall mourn and weep." They may end in it here, either in the way of bitter repentance, or in the way of bitter affliction, which will render all the former pleasures of sin tasteless, leaving nothing of them but the sting; or surely in the life to come. Whereas the sorrows of religion, be they never so deep, make way for joy here, and hereafter too, ver. 21. "Blessed are ye that weep now for ye shall laugh."

Fourthly, The cares of the world, Luke viii. 14. These are a thicket whereby men are entangled in the world lying in wickedness, till they cannot get away. The clay idol bewitches them, that they have neither heart nor hand for coming out from among them. These cares are a net, wherein the feet of poor and rich are held fast; for the frowning and smiling world are each of them apt to crave inordinate care. They hinder in so far as they enhance the whole man: and so,

1. They fix the heart to the world as the main thing, and so keep it back from God, Matth. vi. 24. "No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." Hence covetousness is called idolatry, inasmuch as thereby the world and its good things are put in Christ's room, loved, desired, and followed after more than he.

2. They leave no room for a due concern about spiritual things, Luke x. 41, 42. "Martha, Martha, thou art careful, and troubled about many things; but one thing is needful." This and the other worldly thing, one on the back of another, challenges their care and concern, keeps their hearts and hands ever full, that due care for their souls cannot get entered. Hence the lives of many are spent in a continual hurry, never getting leave to think seriously; and it fares with them as with the man in the parable, 1 Kings xx. 39, 40. "As the king passed by, he cried unto the king; and he said, Thy servant went out into the midst of the battle, and behold, a man turned aside, and brought a man unto me, and said, Keep this man; if by any means he be missing, then shall thy life be for his life, or else thou shalt pay a talent of silver. And as thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone."

3. They leave them no gust nor relish for spiritual things; they make them tasteless to them, so that nothing relishes with them, but carnal worldly things. The smiling world has this effect, Job xxi. 13, 14. "They spend their days in wealth—Therefore they say unto God, Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways." And the frowning world has it too, as in the case of the Israelites under their oppression in Egypt, Exod. vi. 9. "They hearkened not unto Moses, for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage."

To remove this hinderance, consider,

1. The shortness of your time, and how in a little ye will be beyond all the things of the present evil world, to have no more use for them for ever, 1 Cor. vii. 29, 30, 31. "But this I say, brethren, the time is short. It remaineth, that both they that have wives, be as though they had none; and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this world; as not abusing it; for the fashion of this world passeth away." Death approaches, and the frowns of the world can annoy you no more, and its smiles be in no more stead to you. Why do ye take so great care about what is to last so short while? Why is not your short time better filled up?

2. Consider what will be the issue of the cares of the world hindering you to come out from among the world lying in wickedness. Ye will lose your souls in that throng of care for the present life, and no advantage in the world will quit the cost of that, Matth. xvi. 26. "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? Ye have eternity challenging your care, of which if ye continue careless, death will bring you into a surprising plunge.

3. You quite mistake your measures for your own interest, taking a burden on yourself, that might be borne without you, Psal. lv. 22. Your true way would be to come out from among the world lying in wickedness, to Jesus Christ, and leave it to him to care for you, which would not be in vain, 1 Pet. v. 7. "Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you."

Fifthly, Ill company and their influence hinders many. It was Paul's advantage, that when God called him, he conferred not with flesh and blood, Gal. i. 16. For the world lying in wickedness, will never be content that any of their own should leave them; therefore the call is, Psal. xlv. 10. "Forget thine own people, and thy father's house." Satan has his agents in the world, that will be at all pains to entangle them among them that would be away. And they do it,

1. By their example casting off the fear of God, indulging themselves in sinful liberty, and so cast a stumbling block before others, Matth. xviii. 7. And,

2. By their influence otherwise, advising, enticing, and encouraging them to sin, Prov. i. 10. Acting Satan's part.

To remove this hinderance, consider,

1. You have God's call to come away; and it will be a sorry excuse for your disobedience, that others by their example and influence hindered you, Acts iv. 19. "Whether it be right in the sight of God, to hearken unto them more than unto God, judge ye." You ought, at the call of your Maker, to come away in spite of all the bad company that beset you.

2. Open your eyes and see their danger as well as your own. Believe, that the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, Rom. i. 18. and you will be obliged to make away, as the Israelites from the tents of Dathan and Abiram.

3. It will be no comfort to you in the end, to be ruined together with ill company, and by their influence. Their sin is great, but they will leave you to answer for yourselves, and bear your own punishment, Prov. ix. 12. And the society of companions in sin, in hell, will be bitter, as appears from Luke xvi. 27, 28. "I pray thee, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house; for I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment."

Lastly, Delays are a great hinderance: Prov. vi. 9, 10, 11. "How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep? Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep. So shall thy poverty come as one that travaileth, and thy want as an armed man." Men deceive themselves with off puts, and the prospect of much time before them. To remove this obstruction, consider,

1. The longer you delay, it will be the harder to get away from among them. Sin gathers strength by delay of repentance; as the waters, the farther they are from the head, the greater do they grow. The heart becomes harder, the mind blinder, the will more perverse, the affections more carnal.

2. Your time is uncertain; you know not if ever you will see the term-day to which you put off. How many are there that drop into eternity ere ever they are aware? The present time only is yours.

3. Suppose you should see the time you put off to, God may withhold grace from you, Luke xiv. 24. "For I say unto you, that none of these men which were bidden, shall taste of my supper." Take

the alarm therefore in time, and strike in with the opportunity ye now have, Isa. lv. 6. "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near."

Lastly, It is a base spirit that puts you on to delay; it bewrays the predominant love of sin, and shews ye have no regard to God for himself; otherwise ye would not hesitate one moment to obey his call. Wherefore we beseech you to consider the matter, and delay no longer; let a regard to the authority of God, and a view of his matchless excellencies in Christ; let a sense of gratitude for the divine patience, and the love ye bear to your own souls; let every consideration, whether from the terrors of God's everlasting wrath, or the comforts of his everlasting love, unite to move you speedily to come out from among the world lying in wickedness, to the Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Head of the society separated from the world. So coming, ye shall find welcome—"I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

And now to conclude, Ye have had the picture of the world lying in wickedness drawn before you, and the call to come away out from among them. It is like these may appear as idle tales to some, and they may be as one that mocked, Gen. xix. 14. But if ye come not away out from among them, ye will perish among them, and the more fearfully that ye have been so solemnly warned.

THE BELIEVER'S HUNDREDFOLD IN THIS LIFE CONSIDERED; AND A VIEW OF THE REALITY, PARTS, INHABITANTS, PASSAGE INTO, AND STATE OF MEN IN THE WORLD TO COME.

Several Sermons preached at Ettrick, in 1729.

Mark x. 30.

He shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come, eternal life.

Ye have heard much of this present evil world, and have been called to come away out from among them. I come now to tell you, that there is another world beyond it, into which we must all go; a view of which may be of use to stir us up to come out from among the world lying in wickedness, and to make us more indifferent about the smiles and frowns of this world.

The text is a part of an encouragement to saints under worldly losses. The remote occasion of it was, a view of a man ruined with worldly prosperity, whose wealth in the world was the neck-break of his soul; and such examples are never rare, ver. 17—22. (1.) He was a young man, Matth. xix. 20. and a ruler, Luke xviii. 18. Worldly wealth and honour are great snares to people, especially to the young, who are raw and of little experience in the vanity of the world. (2.) He was nevertheless in some concern for another world, ver. 17. "Good master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" For all the temptations hanging about him, he considered that there was a life after this, and that he could not carry his wealth and honour with him thither. Hence though he took Christ but for a good man, he was very respectful to him, he cast himself into his company, he kneeled to him as one desirous to have his blessing; he proposes a weighty question to him about another world. It is a pity that any thing in this world should put that out of one's head and heart.

(3.) But he was a conceited man, unhumbled, unacquainted with his own weakness, and thought he could do well enough, if he knew what. Self conceit mars many good motions, and spoils them all.

Our Lord for his humiliation, sets before him, (1.) The holiness of God, ver. 18. "And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good; there is none good but one, that is God." A view of the goodness and holiness of God is fit to humble sinners, and let them into a view of their own badness and unholiness, Isa. vi. 5. (2.) The holy law, ver. 19. Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother. The law in its holy commandments is a looking glass wherein to see our defilement and sinfulness. He pitches on those of the second table, for in these lies the trial of the sincerity of professors of religion. He begins with the command forbidding the lusts of the flesh, then pride, passion, and revenge, covetousness, *&c.* For the law in these things speaks to all alike, young and old, great and small.

The youth hereupon gives an account of himself, ver. 20. Master, all these have I observed from my youth; in which, though he discovers his ignorance of the spirituality of the law, and his self-justifying temper; yet withal he shews, that, notwithstanding of his circumstances in the world, he had been kept from the gross pollutions of it. He had been no rambling youth, but kept within the bounds of decency. It seems, though he had not grace, he had education.

Christ brings the trial close to him, in his predominant, the love

of the world, ver. 21. "Then Jesus beholding him, loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest; go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast and give to the poor; and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come take up thy cross, and follow me." He had many good things that were lovely in him, but he wanted a heart weaned from the world, and knit to God in Christ; and that want, he is told, behoved to be made up, if ever he would see heaven. *Obs.* 1. They may have many things good about them, where one thing lacking mars all. 2. Whoever would have a happy portion in another, must be ready to part with the good things of this world at Christ's call, and submit to its evil things. Though this is hard to flesh and blood, it is a constitution of heaven not to be altered.

The issue of this trial was sad, he parted with Christ and heaven; since he could not have them on easier terms, he behoved to quit them; for these terms he could not digest, ver. 22. "And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved; for he had great possessions." His great possessions were his great snare. The good things of this world part betwixt Christ and many.

The use Christ makes of this sad event, for the disciples' instruction, ver. 23. "And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!" *Obs.* 1. Though riches make an easy life in this world, they make hard work for the party that has them to get into a better world. 2. The ruining effects saints may see that world's wealth has on men generally, should make them sit down contented with the small share of it which providence lets come into their hands, *q. d.* Now see what world's wealth does.

The disciples being surprised herewith, (1.) Christ explains what he had said, ver. 24. "But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches, to enter into the kingdom of God!" *Obs.* It is hard for men to have world's wealth, and not to trust in it as their portion and happiness, to bring out of it their satisfaction, which they should seek in God. (2.) He confirms it by a proverbial saying of a thing of a difficulty next to impossibility, ver. 25. "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." The gate of life is narrow, the world's wealth is like the burden on the camel's back.

The disciples are astonished at this; they might observe what a great snare poverty was to many, and if it was so with riches too, they say, Who then can be saved? ver. 26. The consideration of the mischief the world does, on the one hand with its frowns, and on the other with its smiles, makes salvation appear very difficult.

Our Lord tells them, that what is impossible to nature is possible to God. The power of his grace can so loose the heart from the world, that it shall not be able to bewitch a man with all its snares, nor hinder him from the kingdom of heaven. Witness Abraham, Job, Joseph, &c. who, though rich men, were yet truly religious, and attained to heavenly happiness.

Follows the immediate occasion of the words of the text. Peter shews how he and the rest had behaved in such a trial, as proved fatal to that man; they had left all they had in the world at Christ's call, and followed him, ver. 28. See Matth. iv. 18—20. It was not much they had to leave for him; but it was by the power of grace they were brought to part with it, little as it was. That is it that makes the difference. Now he is desirous to know the issue of that, and what they were to expect at his hand; and Christ allows his people to persuade themselves, that they shall not be losers at his hand. And therefore whatever weakness might be in Peter's question, our Lord directly answers it, in a liberal promise to all his followers of a sufficient upmaking of all that they lose for him. In which we have,

1. The losers to whom Christ gives security, for upmaking of their loss. And here consider,

1*st*, What kind of losers they are. It is not every kind of losers; some lose their worldly good things for their lusts' sake, squandering away the same on their lusts, and by their criminal negligence; or they are justly taken from them in an ill cause for their crimes; these are not they. But they that quit with any thing for Christ's sake, and the gospel's; the Lord by his call bids them give up with it, and they at his call quit their grip; they cannot keep it, and keep the road of the gospel too; and therefore that they may not go off the road of the gospel, they quit what they have. These are the losers.

2*dly*, What kind of loss it is that Christ puts his people to. It is not the loss of spiritual benefits and privileges, and their portion in another world; but only worldly good things. (1.) He may call them to leave house and hold, and they must leave it for his sake, with all the conveniencies they had in their own house before. If they have not left them where to lay their head, he bids them not ride a ford he rode not before them, Matth. viii. 20. "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." If they be forced to hide in dens and caves of the earth, they fare not worse than the worthies mentioned, Heb. xi. 38. (2.) Their relations, and the comfort they had in them, brethren, sisters, father, mother, wife, and children. He

may carry away their relations from them by death, or otherwise providentially separate them from them, or deprive them of the comfort of them though they be with them, and make them a cross to them. Or he may carry them away from their relations, that they have not access to the comfort they might otherwise have in them. In all these cases they are losers for Christ that give up with them at his call to follow him. (3.) Their lands, and all the profits and advantages flowing from them. Even the king is served by the field; but Christ must be served with the field itself given up to him, when he calls for it; whether it be theirs in property, or only in the use. They must give up their claim to him at his call.

2. What is secured to these losers for Christ? Double.

1*st*, Something in hand, a hundredfold now in this time. The term of this upmaking is in this world, now in this time. Our Lord does indeed reserve the greatest upmaking to another world; but he does not put off his people with nothing in the time: No, there is a settlement for the present made upon them, to bear the expence of their journey, and to bear up their hearts till they get their portion. And that is a hundredfold, namely, of what they lost for him, *viz.* houses, *&c.* It is plain, it cannot be meant of a hundredfold in kind; that is not possible in the case of father and mother; but in value; *i. e.* they shall get what will be a hundred times the value of all they lost for him. For instance, do they lose a house for him? they shall get what will be worth a hundred houses, *&c.* But there is an appurtenance of this hundredfold, that may keep from dreaming of world's ease for all that, with persecutions. All times of the church are not times of public persecution; but this secures them, that go the times as they will, they shall never get the good-will of the world lying in wickedness. Satan and his agents will always be at them, one way or other.

2*dly*, Something in hope. Here is, (1.) The term and place of it, in the world to come. (2.) What they will get there, eternal life. This plainly bears, [1.] That there is a world to come, another world than this. The world properly signifies an age, or duration. And being in opposition to the age of this world, or times of its duration, it signifies the age of eternity. It is used also for the world itself, Heb. i. 2. And being to come, it differs from the present world. [2.] That the world to come is the place and time where and when men are to get the full reward of their works; and therefore men go into that world, when they have done with this; and are not done when dead. *Lastly*, That such losers for Christ shall in that world get eternal life, when others shall get eternal death there; for if in that world were only eternal life, it had been needless to say more than that they should go into that world.

3. The security itself, Christ's own word, "Verily I say unto you," ver. 29. A security that carnal men cannot trust, but all believers take it for good security.

Before I come to the main thing intended, I will speak somewhat to the hundredfold in this life, from the following doctrine, *viz.*

Doct. Our Lord Jesus has given security, for a hundredfold with a burden in this life, to them who for his sake and the gospel's, leave and give up with their worldly good things and enjoyments, at his call.

In discoursing from this doctrine, we shall consider,

I. The parties to whom the security is made.

II. The hundredfold secured to such losers.

III. The burden going along with the hundredfold, with persecutions.

IV. The security given for the hundredfold to the losers for Christ's sake and the gospel's.

V. Make application.

I. We shall consider the parties to whom the security is made. Two things will set this in due light; *viz.* An inquiry,

1. How Christ calls people to leave and give up with any worldly comforts and enjoyments they have had.

2. What it is at Christ's call to leave and give up with them for his sake and the gospel's.

First, I am to inquire how Christ calls people to leave and give up with any worldly comforts and enjoyments they have had.

First, When we cannot keep them without sin. When we are brought to that, that we must either lose them, or sin against God; must either part with them, or part with a good conscience; be sure then Christ is saying, Give up with them, leave them for me. And so it is in four cases.

1. In the case of persecution, or the violence of evil men reducing us to that strait. Thus confessors' goods were called for by Christ, Heb. x. 34. and the lives of the martyrs, chap. xi. 35. And they parted with them, as Joseph dropt his mantle, when he could not keep it and his chastity too. If there had been a fair way to have preserved the substance and the life, and a good conscience too, they would not have been required; but as they could not preserve a good conscience with the possession of them, therefore they were called to part with both substance and life.

The same holds in the case of illegal violence, when men are reduced to such a strait by the violence of evil men in common life; that loss is on the one hand, sin on the other; that is a providential

call to give up with worldly good things and enjoyments, 1 Cor. vi. 6, 7.

2. In the case of justice. It is a divine command, "Owe no man any thing, but to love one another," Rom. xiii. 8. What justice requires us to part with, God requires us to part with; for the righteous Lord loveth righteousness, Psal. xi. 7. And to keep it is robbery, because in justice it is not ours, but another's. And therefore no man can reckon any more his own, than what remains to him after payment of his just debts, 2 Kings iv. 1, 7. To this belongs,

3. The case of restitution of goods unjustly got. What we have unjustly got, is not ours in the sight of God, and therefore God calls to restore it, Luke xix. 8. And the sin of the taking it away, is not forgiven while it is kept. And where it is so, God often forces it out of the hand of them or theirs, taking away more with it, Job xx. 10, 15. For a little of that sort is a moth among, and worms one out of much.

4. In the case of charity. It is the divine command to improve our worldly substance for the honour of God, Prov. iii. 9. and to relieve the wants of the poor and needy, according to our ability, and their need. God has made us stewards, and the truly poor his receivers, Prov. xix. 17. The sturdy beggars are indeed the reproach of our land, and eat the meat out of the mouths of those that are poor indeed; their idleness is their sin, and the sin of the government that suffers them to be idle, 2 Thess. iii. 10. and their vagabond life is their sin and punishment, Psal. cix. 10. But the truly poor, that fain would, but are not able, or cannot have access to do for themselves, God obliges others to help them, even though they be straitened themselves, 2 Cor. viii. 2, "In a great trial of affliction, the abundance of their joy, and their deep poverty, abounded unto the riches of their liberality." Eph. iv. 28, "Let him that stole, steal no more; but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth." See Prov. xxi. 13.

Secondly, When he himself is providentially taking them away from us. Sometimes he lays worldly good things to one's hand; at other times he returns and takes them away, and then doubtless he says, Give them up to ME. Job saw this in his own experience, chap. i. 21, "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, (says he,) and naked shall I return thither; the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." And this the Lord does in two cases.

1. In the case of providential losses, when the things themselves

are by holy providence taken away. Thus the Lord swept away Job's substance, his children, and his health too. At whatever time God thus is pulling from us, we are called to open our hearts to quit them, and let go our grip of them. In that case God is sending to us as he did to the owner of the ass, Matth. xxi. 1—3, "The Lord hath need of them;" and we shall entertain his send as that man, who straightway sent the ass and the colt.

2. In the case of providential restraints, when the comfort of the things is taken away, though themselves remain. Thus the Lord took away Job's comfort in his acquaintance, friends, and domestics, there was an embargo laid upon them, that they had not power to be comfortable to him, but on the contrary were a cross to him, Job xix. 13—16. Yea, in his own wife, who proved unkind to him, ver. 17. and a snare and a cross to him, chap. ii. 9. No person, no thing, can be to us other than what God makes it to be; and sometimes God, for one's trial, squeezes the sap out of their creature-comforts, and so calls them to quit their comfort in them.

SECONDLY, I come to shew what it is at Christ's call to leave and give up with them for his sake and the gospel's. And thus we will see, who they are to whom this security is made. It lies in three things.

First, Discerning of heaven's call to give up with them, 2 Sam. xvi. 10. None can leave any thing at God's call, when he discerns no call from him for that effect. There is a generation who like the dog snarl at the stone, but look not to the hand above that cast it. In their losses they blame this or that person, this and that unlucky accident: but they consider not God's hand over-ruling them, and by these things taking trial of them, Psal. xxviii. 5. We should see him first mover in all the losses that befal us.

Secondly, Loving of Christ and the gospel more than the world, and all that is in it: for that person or thing for whose sake we leave any thing, must needs be more beloved than that thing. This is the habitual temper of soul, from whence that action doth proceed, to be found in all believers, Luke xvi. 26. and them only, 1 John ii. 15. And unless the heart be once moulded into this frame through faith, it is not to be expected that one will truly quit any worldly good for Christ's sake and the gospel's, whatever they may do for their own sake.

Thirdly, Heart and hands quitting grips of them, out of love to Christ and the gospel, Heb. x. 34, "Ye—took joyfully the spoiling of your goods." The call clears to them, that they must part either with Christ or the world in that instance: and laying the two in the balance, Christ and the gospel downweigh the worldly thing, and

they quit it to hold them fast; not only giving it up with the hand, which may be done against one's will, but with the heart. So that this is a religious, holy parting therewith, an act of Christian resignation and self-denial. Hence we may state the character of the losers to whom the hundredfold is secured, in the following particulars.

1. They are true believers, who have taken Christ and the promises of the gospel for their portion, their all, Psal. cxix. 57, "Thou art my portion, O Lord." In vain is it expected, that the heart will ever quit its grip of the world, till it takes grip of Christ and the promise of the gospel. Therefore faith is called buying, wherein the party gets as good as he gives, Rev. iii. 18. Matth. xiii. 45, 46. And indeed in the day of the soul's closing with Christ, it gives up with all things in the world, and takes Christ for them all, Luke xiv. 26. And to such the hundredfold is secured.

2. In all their losses they take God for their party, and yield the things to him, as Job did, chap. i. 21. forecited. They say as Eli did, 1 Sam. iii. 18. "It is the Lord; let him do what seemeth him good."

They have a faith of the divine providence with application to themselves, knowing that nothing can befal them, but as he orders it; they know that he is just in all his ways, and does them no wrong, whatever wrong may be done them by men: yea, that he is good, and punishes them as they well deserve. Therefore they submit to him, saying as the church, Lam. iii. 22. "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not;" and as Hezekiah, Isa. xxxix. ult. "Good is the word of the Lord which thou hast spoken." And thus delivering up their comforts to him, he will restore them an hundredfold, as in Job's case.

3. They yield up the things into the hand he directs, be that what it will. Whether he take away immediately by his own hand, or by the hands of men, right or wrong; the intimation of his will is sufficient to them, as it was to Job, chap. i. 21. though the devil and his agents were instrumental in these losses. They look above second causes, and take their loss out of the hand of the first cause, which employs what second causes he sees meet. If men look not to God in these cases, they cannot expect that he will make up what is not given him.

4. They leave and give up with them, to keep the road of duty in obedience to his command, Heb. xi. 25. It is their care to keep their worldly enjoyments as valuable gifts of God, and not to waste them by riot or negligence; but it is their greater care to keep themselves in the love of God, and in the way of holy obedience.

And therefore when they cannot do both together, they quit the former, and cleave to the latter. Such losers God will make up, (Heb. xi. 25, 26,) that will rather lose their substance, than a pure conscience; that will rather suffer than sin against him.

5. They seek their rest and comfort in him under all their losses, and in the promise of the gospel, Psal. xxvii. 10. By an eye of faith they see a fulness in Christ and the promise; that is sufficient to bear up under all they can lose in the world: they discern a treasure in heaven, which is not liable to be lost. And in the faith thereof they quit their worldly comforts, Heb. x. 34. taking God's promises in the gospel for their heritage, in which they may rejoice in the want of worldly things, Zeph. iii. 12. What makes men hold such a greedy grip of the world, is, that they see not, how if they lose it, the want can be made up: but faith looses that difficulty.

6. They are submissive under their losses, maintaining their love to an afflicting God, and their esteem of the gospel under all their losses, 2 Sam. xv. 25, 26. They will not cast out with God and the gospel for world's enjoyments, nor think the worse of him, because he takes back his own, or denies them what he is not obliged to give them. If such thoughts rise in their hearts, they will wrestle against them, mourn over them, condemn themselves for them, and return to their temper. The contrary disposition prevailing in proud hearts, Satan blows the coal, and oft-times it has a desperate and fearful issue; as in Ahithophel and others.

7. They will take no sinful method to prevent their losses, nor yet to recover them, or shift under them. When life lay at stake with those worthies mentioned, Heb. xi. 35. they would not accept deliverance on any sinful terms; when Joseph was sold for a slave, he would not buy his freedom with defiling his conscience. That is losing for Christ's sake and the gospel's, and them that so lose, Christ will make up; when they that go out of God's ways into sinful ways, which honour not God, but the devil, either for preventing or recovering, will find their loss doubled by these means.

8. *Lastly*, The more that created streams are dried up, the more closely they will seek after the fountain, 1 Tim. v. 5. It is for this very cause the Lord trysts his own people with crosses and losses; as Absalom set Joab's corn-field on fire, the Lord caused a burden to be blown off the back of his people, that they may run their race more speedily; dries up a stream of comfort in a created person or thing, that they may come with greater appetite to the fountain of comfort.

II. The next head is to consider the hundredfold secured to such losers. This is not an hundredfold in kind, but an hundredfold in value. Such as,

First, The peace and pleasurable reflection on the way of losing it, 2 Cor. i. 12. When the losses of untender unholy men leave a sting behind them, in that they find they have lost for their lusts' sake; theirs shall afford them a pleasure, that their losses come not that way, but in a cleanly providential way, by the hand of God taking a trial of them, what they can lose and part with for him. This is an hundredfold more; for,

1. This peace is a Christian, spiritual benefit, flowing from the Spirit's leading, of a man in the way of God; therefore more valuable than the having of temporal good things, which is a common benefit. He may thus reflect, "Had I been left to the swing of my lusts, I might have sustained all this loss by my sinful hand bringing it on; but O how am I obliged to preventing grace!"

2. Such losing is a piece of honour that God puts on his people, 1 Pet. iv. 14. Whatever impossibility there is to reconcile this with the world's false notions of honour; according to the scripture and reason, it is certainly an honour, to have some considerable thing in the world, and a heart to part with for Christ, Heb. xi. And therefore we expect that the greatest sufferings for Christ, will have the richest incomes in the other world.

Secondly, The cordial satisfaction in the way of parting with it. There are two things meeting here, which make an hundredfold more to spring up in the way of satisfaction.

1. The consideration that Christ will condescend to take such a token of our love off our hand, Acts v. 41. It is obligement to the lover, that the beloved party will accept a token of his love; though by that means he has less in his hand than his rival, from whom such a thing is not taken, he has more in hope. All is the Lord's, and that he will take any thing off our hand as a token, will be in the eyes of humble souls a great condescension.

2. The consideration of the Lord's giving a heart to part with it to him. Every serious soul will value this a hundred times more than the having of the thing parted with, 1 Chron. xxix. 14. For the latter is but a common gift, but the former a gift of special grace, Phil. i. 29. And there is far more of the love of God in the one than in the other; for it argues special love.

Thirdly, Contentment with the low and afflicted lot. All the abundance of the world cannot give contentment; but losers for Christ's sake and the gospel's have their worldly loss made up with a gain in the frame of their spirit. A spirit suited to one's lot, brought down to the afflicted condition, is a hundredfold more than what is lost. That is a valuable lesson, Phil. iv. 12, "In all things I am instructed, both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound

and to suffer need;" to have one's thirst abated, as their drink is dried up; to have their desires narrowed as their enjoyments are, Psal. xxxvii. 19. This is an hundredfold; for,

1. Contentment with a little is more valuable by far, than even contentment with much. For it is more difficult to reach, and speaks more of the reality and strength of grace, Psal. xxxvii. 16. It is a good exchange, when what is taken off our comforts, is made up in adding to the contented frame of spirit.

2. The narrowing of the desires of worldly comforts, is better than the enlarging of one's possessions and enjoyments. For the former is cutting short of our lusts, the other food to them.

Fourthly, A particular care of heaven about them for their supply, 1 Pet. v. 7. Losers for Christ have in all ages been the peculiar objects of heaven's care and concern, to their upbearing and throughbearing, John xiv. 18. "I will not leave you comfortless." And none have been better seen to than the children of providence, who have been as the lilies clothed better than Solomon in all his glory. Hence an afflicted lot of saints has been the time of greatest experience; and they have had richest incomes, when living from hand to mouth, Rom. v. 3, 4. This is an hundredfold, for,

1. The suitableness of it to their real needs, Matth. vi. 32. They have a promise, Phil. iv. 19, "My God shall supply all our need, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus;" and God, who is their Father, is a good judge of what these needs are, and will see to suit providential supplies unto them. He has all in hand, and is able; he loves them tenderly, and will give them what is good.

2. The seasonableness of it. Providential favourable casts in this case are double gifts from the timing of them, as being laid in in a nick of time, when they may be most useful, as in Mordecai's case.

3. From both these they bear an impression and character of the divine care and love, so that though for the matter of them they have very small things, yet the image and superscription they bear will make them of much bulk. Thus Esau's countenance was a vast mercy in Jacob's esteem, Gen. xxxiii. 10. And many a thing, which some would account a mere trifle, has filled a saint with joy.

Quest. How can that be? *Ans.* On these reasonable grounds. (1.) The things coming as an answer of prayer. A straitened lot in the world, makes God's children carry even their smaller matters to their prayers; and there are answers of prayer in these cases. (2.) Coming as an accomplishment of a promise depended on by faith. The promise comes as low as to the bread and the water. And the sap of a promise is matter of joy, though it were but a drop.

Fifthly, A particular allowance of communion with God, and ac-

cess to him in duties, made to these losers; that as their trials are greater than those of others, their supports may be conformable, Cant. i. 7. "Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon." Not that they would get these however they carry themselves, but that the Lord has allowed it them being duly exercised by their trials, which was sealed by Paul's experience, 2 Cor. xii. 10. "I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then am I strong." This is agreeable to,

1. The goodness of God, that where he closes the door of the creature fastest on his people, he opens his own the wider; and that they who find the world deafest to their cries, find him most ready to answer them.

I. To their exigence. The drying up of created streams of comfort, makes people more sensible of their need of the fountain, and to thirst the more for it. And those that are most pinched with sense of need, will readily come best speed at the throne of grace. Luke i. 53, "He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he hath sent empty away."

3. To the experience of the saints in all ages. Those who have had or were to get the greatest trials, were they that had the largest portion of spiritual enjoyments falling to their share. And the greatest sufferers and losers have been the greatest gainers in that respect, as in the case of Jacob, Joseph, &c.

Now this is an hundredfold: for,

1. Communion with God is better than the best things the world can afford; one of the kisses of his mouth is preferable to all the treasure the world casts into one's lap, Psal. iv. 6, 7. This made confessors take joyfully the spoiling of their goods, and made martyrs joyfully meet death, made Paul and Silas sing in the prison, and the three children easy in the fiery furnace.

2. It is heaven on earth, Rev. ii. 17, "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna." The saints carried to glory leave all their worldly enjoyments behind them, as Elijah dropt his mantle; and they miss them not there, getting full, immediate, uninterrupted communion with God instead of all; more than we miss the star-light, when the sun shines in his meridian brightness. And communion with God here is a foretaste of heaven.

3. Access to God in duties, eases God's people of a burden of care, getting it cast over on the Lord, whereby they are sustained under their losses, Psal. lv. 22. Many a time the children of God have gone to duty sore bowed down under divers pressures, and

have come away with the load taken off their spirits, as in the case of Hannah, 1 Sam. i. 18. So that what was as a mountain before, becomes like a mole-hill. And it is an hundredfold better to be strengthened from above to go lightly under a burden, than to have it taken off.

4. It makes them find the sweetness of the Bible, and suck the sweet of the promises, Psal. cxix. 49, 50. "Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope. This is my comfort in my affliction; for thy word hath quickened me." While world's ease makes the heart fat as grease, insensible to the consolations of the word; affliction with access to God under it, causes the word relish with the soul, makes a sweetness to be felt in those parts of the word where it was not felt before.

Lastly, The spiritual good effects whereof worldly losses are the causes and occasion, being sanctified. Such are especially,

1. Weanedness from the world, Psal. cxxxi. 3. "My soul is even as a weaned child." The Lord's laying gall and wormwood on the breasts of the creature, is a blessed means to wean them therefrom; his setting fire to their nest in the world, moves them to seek their rest in God, Cant. iv. 8. This makes them long to be home, and to be looking heavenward, and mending their pace.

2. Seeking to get their wants made up in Christ. The world's frowns make them more solicitous for his smiles; while worldly comforts are plucked from them, they endeavour the more to fasten their gripes on him, making a blessed exchange of the world for Christ, Heb. iii. 17, 18. This makes them many times to say, "I had perished unless I had believed," being driven to their spiritual good by afflictions.

3. *Lastly*, Living by faith, Psal. xxvii. 13. "I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living." When created streams are dried up, people must either fetch in their comfort from another quarter, or they must want. For this cause God sweeps away from his people, many times, their comforts of sense, that they may learn to live on the promise by believing.

III. I shall now consider the burden going along with the hundredfold, with persecutions; it implies three things.

1. That in the course of worldly losses and troubles, the hundredfold shall be made forthcoming to them, Heb. x. 34. "Ye took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance." The Lord will not leave his people comfortless, while matters are on a run against them. But as Satan and an ill world are taking away from them

on the one hand, he will be laying in to them on the other. While the world closeth its doors on them, God will open his to them.

2. That the hundredfold in this life, doth not secure the receivers, as to worldly ease thereafter. An end of troubles in this world is not to be expected while we are in it: but though the shower has been great and long, the clouds will return after the rain; and after one loss another will come, that a new trial may be taken of the Lord's people. However much they have endured, they must expect to meet with more. A change of troubles there may be, but there will be no end till the great change come.

Lastly, However, no worldly losses nor troubles shall be able to stop the course of the hundredfold. Let them be never so weighty, the Lord can let in what will downweigh them all, Hab. iii. 17, 18. "Although the fig-tree shall not blossom—yet will I rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." So that let the cloud be never so thick, the eye of faith may see how to get through it; for God lays no trial on his people, without allowing them sufficient furniture for bearing it.

IV. The security given for the hundredfold to the losers for Christ's sake and the gospel's. Concerning which observe these two things.

1. It is Christ's own security. He has engaged for it to his people. And, (1.) He is able, for he is the great Trustee of the covenant, in whose hands all the benefits of the covenant are lodged, to distribute them to poor sinners, Matth. xi. 27. (2.) He is faithful, and cannot break his engagement, for he is truth itself; and it is impossible that he should fail.

2. It is the security of his word; he has given his word on it. And that requires faith in us, *viz.* That we trust to that security for the hundredfold, so shall it be made forthcoming.

I. I shall now shut up this subject with a word of improvement.

Use I. Of information. This doctrine lets us see,

1. That even an afflicting God is a bountiful God, ready to deal bountifully with us, in our most straitening circumstances. Whatever he calls you to part with for him, he is ready to give you more and better in its stead. Think not then that he is a hard master. For however short by the head he sees meet to hold you, it is your own fault if ye be not gainers by all worldly losses and troubles, 2 Chron. xxv. 9.

2. Here is the mystery of the sweet peace and joy that martyrs, confessors, and others have had in their trials and afflictions, Heb. x. 34. They enjoyed the hundredfold. And therefore they preferred Christ's Cross to the world's crown; they would not accept of

deliverance on sinful terms, because so they would have forfeited the hundredfold. Whatever trouble without their crosses and losses brought on them, the hundredfold gave them a peaceful calm within.

USE II. Labour to manage your losses and crosses in a world, so as you may gain the hundredfold. And,

1. Learn to sit loose to the world, and all things and persons in it, that at Christ's call ye may be ready to part with them, or your comfort in them, Luke ix. 23. Let them hang loose about you, that on occasion ye may easily drop them. It is the gluing of our affections to them, that makes it so hard for us to part with them.

2. Whatever way they are taken from you, or withheld from you, make God himself your party, and quit them to him, for his sake and the gospel's, Job i. 21. Thus God will be the party receiver from you, and you may look that he will recompence you. Though you have mismanaged that already, yet there is room to help it, repenting of your unwillingness to part with them, and your not quitting them to him. Let the heart now quit its hankering after them again, for his sake; and all will be set right.

3. Trust him in the promise of the hundredfold; believe that he will make up your losses accordingly, if not in kind, yet in value: and assuredly ye shall not be disappointed, Rom. ix. ult. "Whosoever believeth on him, shall not be ashamed."

Lastly, Seek of him the hundredfold according to his promise, and wait for it in the use of means. In the leaving worldly enjoyments for him, ye make an exchange, taking Christ instead of what you lose; now pursue that, that ye may have that comfort from him, and much more, than ye have lost.

I shall proceed to the main point I intend to discourse on from the text, *viz.*

DOCT. There is another world than this, a world to come, wherein men will receive their part for eternity.

This is an awful subject, and what we know very little about: yet so much is revealed concerning it, as God saw necessary, though not to satisfy our curiosity, yet for our salvation. In speaking to it, I shall,

I. Shew some things imported in this.

II. Confirm the being of another world, a world to come, wherein men shall receive their part for eternity.

III. Essay to give some view of the other world.

IV. Make application of the whole.

I. I am to shew some things imported in this doctrine, That there

is another world than this, a world to come, wherein men will receive their part for eternity. It imports,

1. That this world is a place wherein men receive their part only for time. The parts and portions distributed by divine providence in it, are very different; some are high, others low; some rich, others poor; some healthy, others sickly; some in prosperity, others in adversity; some spend their days in pleasure, others eat with pleasure. But all these things are only for a time; these different states are only to last for a certain number of years, which being expired, things shall be set on a quite different footing in the other world. So,

(1.) The smiles, comforts, and advantages of this world that any do enjoy, will in a little time have an end. It is a pity, that any should value themselves upon them. They are but the conveniences they have in the inn, in their way to the other world, and are neither eternal nor pledges of welfare in eternity, Luke xii. 19,—21.

(2.) The afflictions, crosses, and miseries of this world, will shortly have an end too. As the summer-warmth therefore will not last, neither will its winter-blasts. Both the saint and the sinner will quickly remember them as waters that fail; the one exchanging them in the other world with eternal joys, the other with eternal sorrows.

2. That our main concern lies in the world to come; for there our eternal state is to be settled, there we are to have our portion for eternity. As is the weight of eternity to time, so is the world to come to the present world; and as time will be swallowed up in eternity, so ought our temporal concerns to be engaged in concern about the world to come. It is fearful heedlessness to behave otherwise.

3. Men must pass out of this world into the other world, from out of the world we see, into the world we see not; otherwise there could be no receiving our part in it.

(1.) We must all leave this world, and that passage is by death. That is the way of all flesh, Psal. lxxxix. 48. "What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death? Death is our going hence, Psal. xxxix. ult. And our whole life is a journey through the world, to the end of which journey we come at death, Eccl. ix. 10. However unwilling men may be to leave the world, no art nor might can alter the statute, Heb. ix. 27. "It is appointed unto men once to die."

(2.) We are not done when dead. We do not cease to be, when we cease to breathe in this world; neither do we cease to act, when all bodily motion fails with us. We leave our dead bodies to our friends, for them to lay up in the grave in the lower parts of this earth, but we pass away from among them, for the soul is the man;

and they cannot keep us still, nor can we abide; but dropping the mantle of the body, we fly away.

(3.) We enter then into the other world; as at our birth we are born of our mothers into this world, at our death we are born into the world of spirits. That world which we now hear of, we will then see; and that state we are now making forward to, we will then arrive at. When we are lost to our friends we leave behind us weeping, we will be found of others before us, and perceived as new incomers into their world.

4. This world itself passeth away, the other world will abide for ever; the age of the one is but time, that of the other is eternity; so the former gives place to the latter.

(1.) This world is passing, 1 Cor. vii. 31. 1 John ii. 17. It is long since it began, and it will have an end. Its glass is running, and the last sand thereof will run out at length; the sun and moon are by the appointment of God to make so many rounds, and then time comes to an end, and the fabric of this evil world is dissolved. There was a curse laid on it for man's sin; that deluged it with water once; and in the end will burn it up with fire. So,

[1.] The weary land to the godly will vanish out of their sight; the waste howling wilderness, wherein they had many a heavy heart, for their own sins and miseries, and those of others, they will see no more for ever. It is a world that will not mend, but spurns all means of amendment; it will be destroyed at length, they looking on and seeing the vengeance.

[2.] The land whereon the wicked set their hearts, as the only pleasant land, will sink under their feet, and leave them to drop into the pit of destruction in the other world. It is the stage of their wickedness now; but God will take it down; it is the sink of sin, but it will be burnt up. And they that took it for their portion, will perish, and their portion with them.

(2.) The other world will abide for ever; for there men live eternally, and therefore it must be eternal. The seat of the blessed was never defiled by men's sin, therefore there will be no passing away of it, even when the visible heavens shall be dissolved, which afford light and covering to sinful man; and the seat of the damned will abide for ever; for there the everlasting fire into which they are condemned, will be kept on; and there is the place of everlasting punishment. So in a sort, it will be for evermore the world to come, in the sense that conservation is a continued creation. Hence,

[1.] Entering in the other world, men are at the end of their journey, at their utmost point; they are no more travellers, but at their home, their everlasting home, Rev. iii. 12. Luke xvi. 26. There is

no coming back again into this world, and there is no passing out of that world into another, for there is none to succeed to it.

[2.] Whatever men's portion in that world is, it is sure; for it is an abiding world. Men's portion in this world cannot be sure, because the world itself is not so; it is like the foam on the water, which is liable to perishing, because the water itself is still in motion; but that world is not liable to passing away; happy are they who lay up for themselves treasures in heaven.

5. *Lastly*, Men are to receive, each one at length, his part for eternity. What we get now in hand, is but for time: worldly good things are so, and even the grace given now is the provision given for our journey through time, and is liable to many changes, if not in itself as real inherent grace, yet as to the sense thereof as relative grace; but when we come to the other world, we will receive what falls to our lot for all the ages of eternity. Hence,

(1.) Men's being is to be continued through eternity. God was from eternity, and will be to eternity; we had indeed a beginning of our being, but it will have no end. Our being in this world will soon come to an end; but when we cease to be in this world, we will be in the other. Though the body is mortal, the soul is immortal, and will never cease to be. Death will dissolve the union betwixt soul and body; but it will not touch the soul to put an end to it.

(2.) Our state in the other world will continue for ever, as it is fixed and determined at death, Eccl. xi. 3. If we die in the favour of God, we will never lose it: if we die out of it, we will never recover it; for our state in the other world will be eternal. Now, if we be wrong, we may yet get right again; but there is no mending of our state.

(3.) *Lastly*, Our great work now then must be to have a happy part secured for us there. Were it believed, that the moment is abiding us, wherein we shall be set down in an unalterable state; there could not be so little care about it, to have it right. But alas! the din of this world, will not suffer the report from the other world to take place with us.

II. I shall confirm the being of another world, a world to come, wherein men shall receive their part for eternity. And to establish the notion of that world in the general, consider,

1. There is an invisible world actually in being, namely, the world of spirits, distinct from our visible world, Heb. i. 2; Col. i. 16. Invisible it is, not in respect of the inhabitants thereof, for the saints that are there are in light, and even the rich man in hell is said to see Lazarus in Abraham's bosom; but in respect of us who are in the world, it is invisible. This is that other world, into

which, we say, the souls of men do pass, going out of this world by death.

This is the world to come spoken of in the text, of which heaven the seat of the blessed is a part. For it is evident, that it is in heaven the losing saints shall receive eternal life, even in the heaven that now is; and that their heavenly eternal life is not put off till the last day, Phil. i. 23; Luke xxiv. 51; 2 Cor. v. 1.

The only difficulty now is, how that world now in being, can be called the world to come. To which it is answered, that it is so called in respect to us, who have now no part or place in it, as in this world, but at death are to get it. So that though in itself it is come already, yet as to us it is to come. Further,

2. That world will at the end of time be extended, to the comprehending of the new heavens and new earth, which will take place after the conflagration of this world. That there will be a passing away, an end of this world, appears from 1 John ii. 17. a perishing of it, Psal. cii. 25, 26. and that it will be by fire, 2 Pet. iii. 10; and that God will create new heavens and earth upon the back of that, ver. 13. "Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens, and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." These will be a new world, not belonging to this world, which then will be gone, but to the other world, the world to come.

And in respect of this addition, the other world is the world to come, which is not now in being. And so the world to come will comprehend all, even that space which this world now takes up. And thus the now invisible world will be enlarged, like a house whose rooms are enlarged by taking down the partitions.

3. In that world there will be a quite new state of men and things, 1 John ii. 17. "The world passeth away and the lust thereof; but he that doth the will of God, abideth for ever," Rev. xxi. 4. "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." As is the difference betwixt men and their business on a journey, and when come to their journey's end; so will the difference be of the state of men and things then, from what they are now. The other world brings along with it another state, and so constitutes a change, which is our change by way of eminency, Job xiv. 14. As all the changes we meet with in this world, fall short of the change we make when we come out of the belly into the light of this world; which would give us the greatest surprise, had we the full use of reason then; so all the changes we are acquainted with now, as from health to sickness, or from sickness to health, &c. must needs fall

short of the change that we will undergo, entering the other world.

Now to evince the being of another world, a world to come, consider,

1. The scripture expressly mentions a world to come. So in our text, and Matth. xii. 32. "Whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come." Eph. i. 21. "Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come." What doubt then can they entertain of it, that believe the scriptures to be the word of God? I own, the world to come is sometimes in scripture used for the state of the church under the gospel, as Heb. ii. 5. "For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak." But it is not always so used, Eph. i. 21, just cited. And where it is so used, it is borrowed from the prophets of the Old Testament, who spoke of the gospel church under the notion of a new world, Isa. lxv. 17. to the end. But then it must also be owned, that the prophets in such passages had also the other world in view, and from thence borrowed their expressions for the gospel-church, which still confirms the being of a world to come. Hence Peter, 2 epist. iii. 13. forecited, proves it from Isa. lxv. 17. "For behold, I create new heavens, and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. And such compound senses of passages are usual with the prophets, as Isa. xxvi. 10. "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise." Hos. vi. 2. "After two days will he revive us, in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight." So Rev. vi. 12, &c. and vii. 9, &c.

2. The scripture so speaks of the world we are in, as it supposes the being of another. The scripture usually calls it, not simply the world, but this world, as Jam. ii. 5; 1 John iii. 17. and iv. 17. this present world, 2 Tim. iv. 10; Tit. ii. 12. Now why should it be called this world, if there were not another world? and this present world, if there were not a world to come? Yea, this and the other world are expressly opposed, Luke xx. 34, 35; Eph. i. 21; this time, and the world to come, in the text; this world, and eternal life, John xii. 25. All which plainly declare, that there is another world than this.

3. There are beings who are not inhabitants of our world; therefore there is a world invisible to us, whereof they are inhabitants. The man Christ was in our world for some time, but now is no more in it, John xvi. 11. But somewhere he must be, and it is plain he is gone out of this world into the other world to his Father, John

xiii. 1. There are angels, good and bad, which belong not to our world, as appears from their appearances and actings recorded in scripture; and the denial of them by the Sadducees is condemned, Acts xxiii. 8. Therefore there is another world they belong to.

4. The nature of death and the immortality of the soul evince this point. Death is going out of this world, Psal. xxxix. ult. Job xiv. 2. John xiii. 1. not in respect of our bodies, which are laid up in it, but in respect of our souls, that then return to God who gave them. There must then be another world into which they go. Death dissolves the union betwixt the soul and the body, and the body into parts of which it is made up; but it cannot dissolve the soul into parts, which is a simple spirit; but being loosed from the body, and leaving this world, there must be another world that it is received into. This is plain from the parable, Luke xvi. where Lazarus dying is said to be carried into Abraham's bosom, and the rich man being dead and buried is said to be in hell.

5. It is evident that, in this world, it is generally best with the wicked, and worst with the godly. Look abroad and see into whose hands is the wealth, honour, and ease of this world mostly given? Have not the wicked the greatest share of these by far? And are not adversity and various afflictions in this world, in a special manner the lot of the godly? 1 Cor. xv. 19. Do not many wicked ones prosper on to the end, without any remarkable punishment before the world? and many godly go with a bowed down back to the grave, without any remarkable change into prosperity? Now consider withal the justice and holiness of God, his goodness, wisdom, and love to his people. And thence you will be obliged to conclude, that there is another world, a world to come, wherein all odds shall be made even, wherein it shall be perfectly well with the righteous, and ill with the wicked. It is inconsistent with the divine perfections, that it should be otherwise. What wise or good governor will heap favours on ill men his enemies? and bear hard on good men his friends, always? If he do it at a time, it must be for trial only, but it will not be always so.

6. Conscience within men bears witness to this truth, that there is another world, rewards and punishments after this life. How many good and wise men have suffered death and most exquisite torments here, in the hope of happiness in another world? Heb. xi. How many wicked and ungodly have been under the greatest terrors, in the view and expectation of misery there? These have seized men for crimes the world knew not of, and men who have been in no hazard of punishment from men. And so natural to men is this notion of another world, that there are few or no nations on

the earth, however barbarous, that have not had it. What is it men are so afraid of at death, or in the view of death, but their state in another world?

7. Wherefore did God make man? capable of a happiness he never reaches in this world. Surely he made him for his own glory; but how little glory, how much dishonour has he by him here? Surely God made not man in vain; therefore there is another world, where God will have his glory of man, and the lovers of God will reach the happiness they are capable of. Consider,

(1.) All men desire immortality, or an eternal being in a happy state. This is so woven into our very nature, that we can never absolutely put it away from us, but in every state of man it has been with him; therefore it is from God the author of nature. Yet it is evident, this cannot be obtained here; nevertheless it is not in vain, for that consists not with the goodness of God, that it should be so; therefore there is another world in which it may be satisfied.

(2.) Where the grace of God has touched the heart, there is framed by the Spirit an earnest desire of the perfect enjoyment and glorifying of God, Rom. viii. 23. 2 Cor. v. 2. These are not to be obtained in this world; therefore there is another world in which they shall; for it cannot be that God would create such an appetite after perfection in his saints never to be satisfied. The work of grace is carried on in the soul by degrees, through the Spirit; and it cannot be that God will leave his work imperfect. It is not perfected here; therefore there is another world where it will be perfected, where they shall perfectly enjoy and glorify God.

(3.) Where grace reaches not now, men continue till death in a state of sin, dishonouring God; therefore there is another world in which God will have his glory of such men; for God cannot fall short of his end in making them. Now there is no beginning of a work of grace after death, Eccl. xi. 3. that these should glorify him actively in a state of happiness there; therefore they shall glorify him there passively in a state of misery.

(4.) The dignity of our nature as made rational souls, quite above the beasts that perish; akin to the angelic tribe, yea made after God's own image at first; must needs bear us in hand, that as we consist of one part not of the nature of the earth, but a spiritual substance; so we are not to perish with the earth, but will at length, since we are not to stay here, be inhabitants of another world.

8. There are not wanting emblems of another world after this, to teach us it by the eye, as well as by the ear. There was a pure and undefiled world that Adam was brought into, wherein was paradise, by which heaven is expressed in scripture. This quickly went

out of sight. And a defiled, sinful, miserable world succeeded, much like what it is now, that lasted long. That old world was destroyed by the waters of the flood, and a new world succeeded to it thereafter. An emblem of the destroying of this by fire, and another world coming in its room. There was the state of the world under the law, and the state thereof under the gospel, that was long prophesied of under the name of the world to come, before it came. And even the constant revolutions of winter and summer, night and day, may serve for memorials of the great change of this world, with another world to come.

Lastly, The world cannot be fulfilled, if there be not a world to come; for sure in many parts thereof it is not fully accomplished in this world. Now it is more sure than heaven and earth, and must be completely fulfilled; and therefore there is a world to come in which it must be so, that the veracity of God may be entire.

(2.) The promises of the word are far from being fully accomplished in this world; and therefore they who by faith betake themselves to them for their portion, must not only live in faith, but die in faith, Heb. xi. 13. In this world there is a begun accomplishment of them; but certain it is, that God's people have always vastly more in hope, than in hand, 1 Cor. ii. 9. But their faith and hope should be vain, were there not a world to come.

(2.) The threatenings of the word are not fully accomplished in this world neither. Many ungodly men live and die in peace, as far as the world can discern, Job xxi. 18. Psal. lxxiii. 3, 4. Yet most terrible things are denounced against them in the word; and that they are not accomplished in this world, is an infallible proof, that there is another world in which they shall.

A DESCRIPTION OF THE OTHER WORLD.

III. Having evinced the being of another world, a world to come, we shall now essay to give some view of that world. And here we are much in the dark, knowing but very little of the subject; and therefore it is a very scanty view we can pretend to give of it. The reasons hereof are,

1. We are while in this body creatures of sense, and much of the knowledge we have arises from our senses; but thither our senses cannot reach. We see, and hear, and feel much of this world lying in wickedness, whereby we are in a capacity to judge thereof; but in respect of these our senses, and all other, that world is as if it were not at all; so that those who are immersed in sense, void of faith, heed not the world. There are loud songs of joy and praise

among the saints in that world, and howlings among the damned there; but listen we as we will, we can hear neither. There is shining glory in one part of it, and darkness and misery in the other; but neither of them can our eyes perceive.

2. The communication betwixt our world and it, is stopt beyond the power of men to open it. Men have opened a communication betwixt us and the most remote parts of this world; they have found means to pass the vast oceans between them and us, to go to them that dwell in the utmost parts, and to return and give us descriptions of their part of the world, and the manner of the inhabitants. But the invisible world remains yet the unknown land to us, and will do so to the end. There is a passage to it, but not at our will neither; but there is no passage back again to us. All of us have friends and acquaintance there before us, but no more communication betwixt them and us, than others.

3. Though there have been apparitions of inhabitants of that world, unto some of our world, both of good angels and of saints, Matth. xxvii. 53, and of evil angels, Matth. iv.; yet it is observable, that these were quite extraordinary, and happened but to very few; that men are very unable to bear the sight even of good angels, or to converse with them, Dan. viii. 17, 18; and that the accounts they have brought concerned men's duty, or events to befal in this world, and not to give them descriptions of the other world whence they came. And if at any time evil spirits have offered reports of that kind, they cannot be depended on, for the devil is "a liar, and the father of it," John viii. 44. And apparitions of the dead are very suspicious; and it is like Satan offers in that kind many illusions, as is thought he did in the case of the apparition of Samuel, 1 Sam. xxviii.

4. The Lord has made the revelations concerning the other world but sparingly in the word, from whence we get our notices of it. There is as much there discovered about it, as is necessary for us to know for our salvation. The happiness of the inhabitants of one part of it, and the misery of the other, are in the general, plainly laid before us, to stir us up to our duty, to see timely how to be right posted there; but certainly there is a vail drawn over many particulars concerning it, which we will never be able while here to draw by, 1 Kings x. 7. Besides, we are slow of understanding what is revealed about it.

Lastly, There is indeed a disproportion between our present faculties and the clear and distinct notions of the other world. As to heaven's happiness, there is a plain and pointed testimony, 1 Cor. ii. 9, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the

heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." The eye sees many things that the hands cannot reach, the ear hears more than the eye sees; but the heart conceives more than is either seen or heard, yet cannot reach that. The same may be said of the misery of hell, it is beyond our conception. When Paul was caught up to the third heaven, he heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful [marg. *possible*] for a man to utter," 2 Cor. xii. 4. An evidence hereof is, that the notices given us of the other world, are much in the way of similitudes taken from things we are acquainted with, as heaven a glorious city, hell a burning lake. Our Lord gives the reason, John iii. 12, "If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?" So our notions of these things are like those of children of what they never saw, 1 Cor. xiii. 11, 12.

Wherefore the little I can or will adventure to say on that world, shall be comprised in a few heads.

1. The parts of the other world.
2. The inhabitants of it.
3. The passage into it.
4. The state of men in it.

I. *Of the Parts of the Other World.*

That vast world is, according to the scripture, divided into two, and but two parts, heaven the seat of the blessed, and hell the seat of the damned. A purgatory, or place of a middle state between these, there is none; for scripture mentions but two places, into one of which souls separated from their bodies do pass, Luke xvi. 22, 23. And accordingly there are but two ways, the one to life, the other to destruction, Matth. vii. 13, 14. Besides, the sins of believers are fully purged away by the blood of Christ, and the scripture knows no other purgative of sin, 1 John i. 7. Heb. x. 14, 17. Unbelievers die in their sins without hope, Prov. xiv. 13. The saints are happy immediately after death, Rev. xiv. 13. Therefore Paul desired to be dissolved, Phil. i. 23, "For we know, (says he,) that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens," 2 Cor. v. 1.

I shall speak a word of these two parts.

FIRST, The one part of the other world is heaven, the empyreal heaven, the seat of the blessed. Concerning which, under the guidance of scripture-light, we may consider three things of it as a part of the other world.

First, What it is; for that it is can be refused by none who own the scripture, and the being of another world.

1. It is a real definite place. I think they refine too much on the scripture expression that deny a local heaven, and confine it to the notion of a state. Our Lord expressly calls it a place, John xiv. 2, "In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you: I go to prepare a place for you." And the body of Christ is contained in it, Acts iii. 21. and the bodies of some saints, Enoch and Elias, are already in it, and the bodies of all the elect shall be in it; and bodies must needs be circumscribed in a place.

It is a definite place, and not every where, where God is. It is not on earth, for earth and heaven are opposed, Psal. cxv. 15; Col. iii. 1. And betwixt it and hell a gulf is fixed, that it reaches not thither, Luke xvi. 26. And though finite spirits that are perfect are in it, yet it cannot contain God, who is not only omnipresent, but immense, 1 Kings viii. 27. therefore it is a place that hath its bounds. Hence,

2. It is a created thing; for it is the throne of God, Isa. lxvi. 1. his house and dwelling, John xiv. 2. therefore is not God, but created by him; since whatsoever is, is either the Creator or a creature. The scripture is express, that God made it, Heb. xi. 10. "For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." And whereas it is said to be not made with hands, 2 Cor. v. 1. Heb. ix. 24. that denies it only to be made by men, as houses here are, and the tabernacle was.

Moreover, it was created within the six days, and therefore is not to be imagined to have been long before this world, much less from everlasting, Exod. xx. 11. No; but it was created the first day, and was absolutely the first thing that was created, Gen. i. 1. Accordingly the inhabitants thereof, the angels, created with it, are said to have shouted at laying the foundation of the earth, Job xxxviii. 4, 7. Agreeable to all which it is said to have been "prepared from the foundation of the world," Matth. xxv. 34.

SECONDLY, Where it is. As to this point, the situation thereof, the scripture is plain in two things.

1. That it is upward from us who are in this visible world. For it is the dwelling of God, and where the man Christ hath his seat, and that is on high, Psal. cxiii. 5, "Who is like unto the Lord our God, who dwelleth on high?" Heb. i. 3, "When he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." Col. iii. 1, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." Christ coming thence into our world at first, is said to come down from it, John iii. 13; and at his second coming, he will descend from it, and

be met by the saints in the air, 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17. So when he went to it after his resurrection, he is said to have been carried up into it, Luke xxiv. 41. taken up, gone up, a cloud receiving him out of the disciples' sight, Acts i. 9, 10.

2. That it is above all the visible heavens, sun, moon, and stars. For the heaven which is the seat of the blessed, is the same heaven where the man Christ is, John vii. 24, and xiv. 3. therefore they are said to be with Christ, Phil. i. 23. with the Lord, 1 Thess. iv. 17. But the place where Christ is, is above and far above all the visible heavens, Eph. iv. 10. Therefore it is above them all. Hence the scripture calls it the third heaven, 2 Cor. xii. 2. It speaks of a threefold heaven. (1.) The airy heaven, wherein the clouds are, Gen. vii. 11. and the fowls fly, Gen. i. 20. hence called the clouds of heaven, and the fowls of heaven. (2.) The starry heaven, where are the sun, moon, and stars, Gen. i. 14, 16. called therefore the host of heaven, Deut. xvii. 3. (3.) The third heaven above all these, which is that of the blessed.

THIRDLY, What sort of a place it is, as to the qualities thereof. A particular description thereof is beyond the reach of mortals, 1 Cor. ii. 9. It is observable, that Moses does no more but mention it, Gen. i. and then proceeds to the description of the earth and visible heavens, their parts, and how they were created; thus drawing a vail over the highest heavens, not to be removed till we come there. Only some general notices of it appear through the vail, in the light of the world, which we shall observe. It is,

1. A holy place, Psal. xv. 1. the holy of holies, or the holiest of all, Heb. ix. 8. in allusion to the place in the tabernacle and temple so called. This lower world is the open court as it were, the starry heaven the holy place; but the third heaven the holy of holies, into which Christ at his ascension as our High Priest is entered, Heb. ix. 12. and has opened the country into it for us also, chap. x. 19.

Here this world lies in wickedness, there the other world shines in holiness. Here is no clean thing, there is no unclean thing, Rev. xxi. 27. It is the holy Jerusalem, ver. 10. There is nothing there but what is holy, perfectly holy; even the spirits of just men must be made perfect, ere they enter there; and for others, they can never breathe the air of that holy land, but are kept without, chap. xxii. 15.

2. A most lightsome place. It is all light, Col. i. 12. The sun in his brightness makes this world pleasant; but then all looks awful and gloomy again in the night, and there is always night in some place of it. But there is no night, no darkness there, Rev. xxi. 5. The seat of the blessed enjoys an eternal day; for the light thereof

is not made by sun and moon circling about it, as here; they would be as needless there, as the light of a candle in the brightest sunshine here. And such light it is, as mortal eyes cannot behold it, 1 Tim. vi. 16.

3. A most glorious place, Psal. lxxiii. 25. How glorious would a king's palace on earth, with all its rich furniture, appear to us? But should all the glory of all the palaces on earth be brought together into one, how much more would that appear glorious? and we are allowed that thought to help us to conceive of heaven, Rev. xxi. 24, "The kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it." For it is the palace of the King of kings, Psal. xlv. 15. where he keeps his court. Nay, it is his throne, Isa. lxvi. 1, "Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool." How glorious must that throne be, that has such a footstool? So glorious that it would absolutely confound us mortals with its dazzling glory and splendour, Job xxvi. 9.

4. A most rich place. We know the riches of far countries, by the rich things brought out of them to our country: now every valuable thing comes from thence, Jam. i. 17, "Every good gift, and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights." Every inhabitant there is a king, with a crown on his head, a sceptre in his hand, and royal treasures to support his dignity; for heaven is a crowning city, whose merchants are princes, whose traffickers are the honourable of the earth, to allude to Isa. xxiii. 8. There the "gates are of pearl, and the street of pure gold," Rev. xxi. 21. It is rich in its affording all things within itself, ver. 7. "He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he shall be my son."

5. A most pleasing place. How can it be otherwise, considering the light, glory and riches, that must needs make it a most beautiful and lovely place? therefore it is called paradise, 2 Cor. xii. 4. There a river of pleasures runs, enough to satisfy all the inhabitants, Psal. xxxvi. 8; but no surfeiting, for there are no dreggy pleasures there. These we mortals can have no distinct notions of; the best guess to be made of them is, by the foretastes of heaven in the joy of the Holy Ghost, sometimes afforded believers.

A most spacious place, John xiv. 2. "In my Father's house are many mansions." It is shown us not only under the notion of a large house, but of a country, yea a kingdom. If the airy heaven is more spacious than our earth, which it surrounds, and the starry heaven than the airy heaven, what can we think of the third heaven that is above them all? Being a real place, it cannot be immense indeed, it is measurable, but we find it is measured by an angel, not

by a man, Rev. xxi. 9, 15. And how can it be otherwise than of a vast place, that is to be the happy abode of all the saints with the angels, containing the bodies of all saints that have been, or shall be to the end of the world?

Lastly, A place liable to no shock or change. The apostle intimates to us, that it is a continuing city, Heb. xiii. 14. that will stand when all this world is laid in ashes; a city that hath foundations, chap. xi. 10. *viz.* which shall never be overturned; a kingdom that cannot be moved, Heb. xii. 28. even when the visible heavens and earth shall be shaken, so as to be shaken all asunder. Therefore it is eternal, 2 Cor. v. 1.

Inf. 1. Let God's people be put to suffer for him what they will, they can never be losers at his hand, Heb. xi. 16. "God is not ashamed to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a city." Suppose they be turned out of house and hold, pinched with cold, hunger, thirst, and nakedness, loaded with reproach, suffer the most exquisite torments unto death; they are not losers at his hand; he may well put them to all these, and yet maintain and shew his special love to them, having such a place provided for them in the other world, where all will be abundantly made up. And they had need of much here, that are like to have no part there; for have what they will, it is impossible it can make up their loss.

2. Lift your eyes, O sinners, from off all worldy glory, and stay your pursuit of it; there is a glory of heaven, in the view of which it would all disappear, like as the stars do at the rising of the sun. Alas! the glory which takes with most of us, is that which Laban's sons so highly esteemed, Gen. xxxi. 1. a great stock, riches, and wealth; they see no glory so attractive as that. But if ye are the children of God, the glory of the city above will darken it in your eyes. O set your eyes and hearts on that glorious city, Heb. xi. 10. The earth in its most beautiful spots is the work of God's hands, but the visible heavens of his fingers, Psal. viii. 3. but of the seat of the blessed he is the artist, Heb. xi. 10. Gr. as if the Omnipotent had used a peculiar art in making of that.

3. See the necessity of holiness, Heb. xii. 14. "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." Psal. xv. 1. "Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill?" The unholy may get room in this world, and the chief rooms; but there is no room for them in the other world, but without the gates of heaven in outer darkness. If there be no holiness here, there will be no happiness hereafter; the dogs and swine come not into that holy place.

4. How inexpressibly happy shall they be that get thither? to

enjoy the light there, behold the glory, possess the riches, drink of the refined pleasures, walk at liberty in that spacious place, and enter into happiness there where there is no change? The faith of this could not miss, if lively, to cause them sing the triumph before the victory.

Lastly, What an unspeakable loss must the loss of heaven be? If there were no more for hell, it might be most heavy. So great as heaven's happiness is, so great will their loss be, who come short of it.

SECONDLY, The other part of the other world is Hell, the seat of the damned. Concerning which, considered as a part of the other world, we shall, under the guidance of scripture-light, inquire into three things.

FIRST, What it is? That there is a hell as well as a heaven, one who believes the scripture cannot doubt. As to what it is, we say,

1. It is a real definite place also. There is a local hell, as well as heaven; the scripture expressly calls it a place, Acts i. 25.—"that he (*viz.* Judas) might go to his own place." And it hath its bounds whereby it is seperated from heaven, Luke xvi. 26. There the spirits of wicked men separated from their bodies, are detained as in prison, 1 Pet. iii. 19, 20; and there their bodies being reunited to their souls at the last day, will be shut up, Matth. xxv. 41.

2. Hence it is a created thing also, ib. But when it was created, I cannot say, no express mention being made of it by Moses in the history of the creation. Only it is of old, Isa. xxx. ult. And whereas it is evident that the angels were fallen very early, and, I think, by the first day of man's creation; they found it ready for them upon their sinning, 2 Pet. ii. 4. This concludes it to have been made within the six days.

SECONDLY, Where it is? This question we cannot pretend to satisfy, the scripture not being clear in this point. It is our business to know how to escape it, rather than to dispute where it is. Two things in the general seem plain about it.

1. That it is without the boundaries of the heaven which is the seat of the blessed. Hence it is called outer darkness, Matth. vii. 12. It is without the gates of the holy city, Rev. xxiii. 14, 15. the place of his glorious presence, as Cain was cast out from his presence, 2 Thess. i. 9.

2. That it is down or beneath in respect of heaven, the seat of the blessed; for so the scripture still speaks of it as below. Capernaum exalted to heaven, was to be brought down to hell, Matth. xi. 23. the fallen angels were cast down into it, 2 Pet. ii. 4. "The way of life is above to the wise," says Solomon, "that he may depart

from hell beneath," Prov. xv. 24. And says God, "A fire is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn unto the lowest hell," Deut. xxxii. 22. Accordingly it is called the deep, Luke viii. 31. the bottomless pit, Rev. ix. 1. the motion from which is ascending or coming up, chap. xi. 7.

Where it is more particularly, I think, the scripture, doth not clearly shew. It is certain it is, be where it will.

THIRDLY, What sort of a place it is, as to the qualities thereof?

1. It is an unholy and unclean place, as much as any place can be so. There meet together all the dregs of the creation, persons and things, sin and all the effects thereof with the sinners, Rev. xx. 14, 15. Now there is much of that uncleanness upon the earth; but the earth will be purged and purified at length, and all gathered together there.

2. It is a place of horrible darkness, called therefore outer darkness, Matth. viii. 12. Light is sweet; but it is the land of darkness, as darkness itself; there is the blackness of darkness, Jude, 13. chains of darkness, 2 Pet. ii. 4. where I think there is an allusion to the Egyptian darkness, Exod. x. 22, 23. and the mist of darkness, 2 Pet. ii. 17. No sun, moon, nor star light appear there, no candle shines there; and whatever fire is there, it is scorching heat without light, for those who having the light chose to walk in darkness.

3. It is a most dismal and melancholy place, a place of "weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth," Luke xiii. 28. Nothing pleasant is to be found there; no pleasures of the mind, no pleasures of sense are there. It is a lake, yet there is not a drop of water in that lake to cool the tongue; it is a lake of fire and brimstone. It is a pit, a bottomless pit. What heart can conceive the horror of such a place, or what dreary place or dungeon in the world can be a sufficient emblem of it?

4. It is a place of torment, Luke xvi. 24; it is therefore represented by Tophet, or the valley of Hinnom, from whence it hath its name in the New Testament, in which place the idolaters burnt their children in the fire, and beat drums that they might not hear their shrieks. There the damned find themselves gnawn with the worm that never dies, scorched with the fire that is never quenched. There men pay dear for the pleasures of sin, which they sometimes swam in, being punished from the presence of the Lord.

5. It is a fast and firm place, whence there is no escaping. It is God's prison-house, where he keeps his criminals in chains till the judgment of the great day, 1 Pet. iii. 19. and 2 Pet. ii. 4. There is a gulf fixed that none can pass, to get out of that place into the seat

of the blessed; but when one is once there, no slight nor might can obtain liberty any more.

Lastly, It is an everlasting place. Whether there may be any change of it by the general conflagration, or not, we do not know; but certain it is, that if it be, it will be to the worse, and hell shall be for ever as well as heaven, for the fire there will be everlasting, Matth. xxv. 41. and the chains of darkness there are everlasting, Jude, 6. There the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched; Therefore the place where they shall be or are, is everlasting.

Inf. 1. God is a just God, and a most dreadful hater and avenger of sin, Hab. i. 13. He has given incontestible evidences of it in this world; but in the other world he gives such evidence as carries off all doubt of it from the sinner. As looking up into heaven the seat of the blessed, you may see God's love to holiness; so looking down to hell the seat and place of the damned, you may see what fiery indignation he has against sin. How keen must that hatred of it be in him, who has prepared such a place for the punishment of it?

2. God may well suffer sinners to pass unpunished and prosper for a while, without any the least imputation on his holiness and justice. For he sees the sinner's day is coming, the place is prepared where his holiness and justice will be sufficiently vindicated. Indeed if there were no other world than this, or no hell in the other world for sinners, justice would necessarily require that they should be punished in this life. But since there is a reckoning with them on the other side, the accounts may lie dormant while they are here, with safety of justice.

3. The pleasures and profits of sin are dear bought, in whatever measure any do enjoy them, Matth. xvi. 26. "For what is a man profited, if he should gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" It is absolutely impossible that ever any thing gained here should be able to quit the cost of such a lodging after death. If one should be kept in greatest extremity during this life, heaven would make up all; but if all the imaginable pleasures and profits of this world should be heaped together upon one, they could never be sufficient hire for going to such a place.

Lastly, The misery of the damned is inexpressible, but certainly it is little believed. O what must the case of those be, whose unholy lives have now lodged them in that unclean place! how will they take with the blackness of darkness there! How can they bear up in that dismal place! endure the torments there, seeing no way to escape? How must it eat them, to think that there they must be for ever! Yet how unconcerned are we, that we go not into that place of torment!

These are the two parts of the other world, heaven and hell. And between them there is a great gulf impassable fixed, Luke xvi. 26. The nature of it we know not, further than that thereby all passage betwixt the two parts of the other world is stopt. Betwixt this world and the other there is a passage; but betwixt the parts of the other world there is none, and there never will be any, for it is fixed. So the inhabitants of each part are unalterably seated, that they cannot remove from the one to the other for ever, which makes the happiness of the one, and the misery of the other, eternal.

These are the present parts of the other world. There is another part of it which is future, and will be added thereto after the last judgment, *viz.* the new heavens and the new earth, to be made by the omnipotent hand after the general conflagration, Is. lxv. 17. "Behold, I create new heavens, and a new earth." 2 Pet. iii. 12, 13. "We, according to his promise, look for new heavens, and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness," Rev. xxi. 1. "And I saw a new heaven, and a new earth." Of the nature and use of these we know very little. Only,

1. They will be an appurtenance of heaven the seat of the blessed, 2 Pet. iii. 13. As this world now is an appurtenance of hell, as being a world lying in wickedness; so that will be an appurtenance of heaven, as an inferior world wherein dwelleth righteousness. It will be the court of the temple above, having such a relation to heaven, as the court of Israel and the court of the priests to the temple house, Isa. lxvi. 22. "The new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord." So did the court, Exod. xxix. 42. "This shall be a continual burnt-offering throughout your generations, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, before the Lord; where I will meet you, to speak there unto thee." 2 Chron. i. 6. "And Solomon went up thither to the brasen altar before the Lord, which was at the tabernacle of the congregation, and offered a thousand burnt-offerings upon it."

2. They will be a very glorious heaven and earth, far more glorious than those that now we have. This is intimated by the newness of them. The heavens and earth that now are, are like an old garment, Psal. cii. 26. sullied and rent: but they will be splendid and beautiful as a new one. The day of their creation is the day of restoration of all things, *viz.* into their primitive glory and splendour, Acts iii. 21. and that with such an advantage, the former shall not be remembered, in respect of the surpassing glory, Isa. lxv. 17.

3. They will be pure and incorrupt, Rom. viii. 21. "The creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into that glorious liberty of the children of God." There will be no

noisome vapour there, nothing offensive to the eye, smell, or ear, or touch; but all will be grateful to the senses of glorified bodies, Rev. xxi. 4, 5, "There shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne, said, Behold, I make all things new." All the effects of sin on the creature shall be purged away, and as it were swept off into the lake of fire, Rev. xx. 14. That earth will be holy ground, in a more strict sense than the ground of the temple of Jerusalem was; nothing touching there, that is defiling, and therefore nothing to purge away there. Compare Rev. xvi. 16—19.

4. They will belong to the saints without any partnership of the wicked in them, 2 Pet. iii. 13, "We look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." The wicked's heaven and earth will then be away, consumed with fire, and those of the godly succeed, wherein they can have no part with them. The dominion over the creatures lost by Adam, and purchased again for the saints by Christ, is not fully restored in this life; but it is promised, and shall then be restored in the other world. Abraham had the promise of being heir of the world, Rom. iv. 13. and the meek have the promise of inheriting the earth, Matth. v. 5. and that alone and in profound peace, Psal. xxxvii. 9—11. which hath not its full accomplishment but in the new earth.

5. They will be of use for the glory of God, and the delight of the saints. These were the design and end of the first heavens and earth, which were made all very good; but that design of them was marred by sin. Therefore in the restitution of all things, that design shall take, Rom. viii. 20, 21. God will set them as monuments of his glory, looking-glasses of his power, wisdom, and goodness. They are so now, Psal. xix. 1. but, by reason of our blindness, the end is not obtained: but then the eyes of the saints shall be cleared, and the looking-glass brightened; and so the Creator shall have his glory. And they will serve for the delight of the saints, Isa. lxv. 17, 18. "Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be you glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy." God himself will be their chief delight, with the glory of the highest heavens, but the new heavens and earth will be their secondary delight.

And none must think, that upon this there must be an interruption of their heavenly joy and happiness; for suppose them to be sometimes bodily on the new earth, which 2 Pet. iii. 13. seems to favour, it will be but as coming to their country seat, and they will

still have the glorious presence of God with them, for the new heavens and earth shall stand at his face, Isa. lxvi. 22. Heb. as the court of the temple did. There will be no withholding the face of his throne there, as now, Job xxvi. 9.

. *Lastly*, They will remain for ever, Isa. lxvi. 22. That glorious fabric shall stand for ever: it will never wax old, it shall never be shaken in the least, nor taken down. A beginning it will have, but no end. There will be no deluge, nor conflagration of the new heavens and earth.

Inf. 1. As we go through this world towards the other, there is great need to take heed that we do not mistake our way, taking the way to hell instead of the way to heaven. For wherever our way lands us, there we are fixed. If one instead of going to one city, should mistake his way and go to another, he seeing his mistake might go out of the wrong way to the right one, and so retrieve his error; but when one is once landed in hell, there is no retrieving of that mistake, there is no getting over the gulf betwixt it and heaven.

2. The unhinging of the creation will be remedied, and the abused creatures will be delivered and restored to their primitive end. Ungodly men abuse these visible heavens and earth to the dishonour of God and service of their lusts; whereby the creation groans under them. But God will put an end to that, destroying this abused and polluted fabric, and rear up a new one, where no abuse can have place for ever, but God shall be glorified.

3. They make more haste than good speed that set their hearts on this earth to inherit it. For whatever speed they come therein, their inheritance will be burnt up, it will not last; the earth that will last, where one may make a sure purchase, belongs to the world to come, and particularly to heaven, and will be the inheritance of the saints only, Psal. xxxvii. 9, "For evil doers shall be cut off, but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth." Therefore it is undoubtedly better to wait for our part by faith, than to press for it in hand here.

4. God's people have no reason to grudge and be uneasy, however small a portion they have of this earth; nor yet to despond on the view of the wickedness done upon it. For there is a new heaven and earth coming more glorious than this, in which they shall not be hampered, but enjoy it all with all freedom as the lords of it. And there shall be no sin nor disorder in it, no injustice or oppression, no ill neighbourhood; nothing but righteousness dwelling there.

5. *Lastly*, Hell will be a close prison, there will be no getting out of it for ever. There is an impassible gulf betwixt heaven and it;

the new heavens and earth will be an appurtenance of heaven; and therefore the prisoners there can no more get out to the new earth, than to the highest heaven. Nay, neither devils nor men will be able to come from thence to set a foot upon that earth, however they range through this. So losing heaven, they will lose the earth too.

Thus far for the parts of the other world.

II. *Of the Inhabitants of the Other World.*

We have seen the parts of the other world, let us now consider the inhabitants of these parts. And,

FIRST, The inhabitants of the upper part, *viz.* heaven. These are,

1. God himself, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, Matth. vi. 9. God is every where present, and immense: but there he is as a king in his palace, on his throne. There he manifests his glory in a manner inconceivable to us mortals: and by his glorious presence makes the happiness of the creatures, who being there see his face. How glorious is a palace when the king is in it with his court! In heaven the great King of the world keeps his court.

2. The man Christ. He was sometime an inhabitant of our world, and when he was in it had not where to lay his head: now he is there, and will be there to the end of the world, Acts iii. 21. sitting on the right hand of God, as the heir of all things. And there he will be for evermore, 1 Thess. iv. 17. He has there an inconceivable glory, even of his blessed body, Phil. iii. 21. In his transfiguration on earth, "his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light," Matth. xvii. 2. How gloriously must it then shine in heaven!

3. The holy angels, Matth. xxiv. 36. These are glorious creatures, natives of the place, pure spirits that never sinned, waiting about the throne, ready to execute the commands of God and Christ their head. They are of a nature superior to man; but full they are of love and good-will to us, witness their song, Luke ii. 14. at our Saviour's birth; and our nature is exalted above theirs in Christ, so that they are ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation, Heb. i. ult. Their number we know not, but there must needs be vast numbers of them, considering the scripture-account, Dan. vii. 10. even such as is innumerable to us in this state, Heb. xii. 22. See Matth. xxvi. 53.

Lastly, The souls of all departed saints are there, now perfected, Heb. xii. 23. There are the blessed souls of all the holy patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, and of all the godly that have been in the

world since the beginning; thither all the godly that now are in the world, yea and all that shall be to the end of the world, shall certainly go and dwell for ever. Enoch and Elias are there soul and body; and so shall all the saints be after the last judgment, shining in glory, as the stars of the firmament.

SECONDLY, The inhabitants of the lower part of the other world, *viz.* hell. These are,

1. The devil and his angels, Matth. xxv. 41. all of them with the prince, called the prince of the devils, chap. xii. 24. fallen angels, 2 Pet. ii. 4. These are most wicked and unclean spirits, enemies to God and Christ, Matth. xiii. 39. 2 Cor. vi. 15. and to mankind, therefore called Satan or an adversary; subtle as a serpent and mischievous, false and deceiving, malicious and cruel, murderers and roaring lions, desperate without hope for ever. The number of them is without question vast, a legion of them being in one man, Luke viii. 30. They are not so fixed to their eternal abode as yet, but that this world is full of them, so as no man wants a tempter carrying his hell about with him; but they will be fixed at length in their place, which they themselves are sure of, Luke viii. 31. Jam. ii. 19.

2. The souls of the wicked departed, Luke xvi. 23. There is their habitation as of prisoners in a pit, 1 Pet. iii. 19. These also are wicked spirits, having been by death driven away in their wickedness; and now absolutely desperate, without the least gleam of hope; from which must needs issue their arriving there at a height of wickedness agreeable to their state. Their number also is vast, being all that have lived and died in their natural state from the beginning of the world, and will be increased with all that shall so live and die to the end.

Inf. 1. Heaven's happiness must needs be unspeakable, in respect of the society there. The saints going thither shall no more be in a lonely condition, but have the pleasant society of other saints perfected, holy angels, the man Christ, and God himself. The society of saints here is very comfortable, how much more the general assembly of them in heaven? There are the angels, the courtiers of the great King burning with love to God, and warm love to the saints. Yea there is the tabernacle of God with men, Rev. xxi. 3.

2. Hell's horror must be unspeakable also, in regard of the society there. The appearance of one evil spirit now strikes the children of men with terror; but who can conceive the horror of being cast into one prison, with the damned crew, to hear the hissings of these serpents, the roarings of these devouring lions, the weeping, wailing, and gnashing of the teeth of the wicked sunk in despair? and that for ever!

3. The two parties now wearied of one another, will be fairly parted in the other world, never to come together again. The godly are weary of the society of the wicked. The Psalmist finds himself as dwelling in Mesech and Kedar, Psal. cxx. 5. "Among lions, among them that are set on fire, even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword," Psal. lvii. 4; and therefore wishes for wings to flee away from them, Psal. lv. 6. "O that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away and be at rest." Death will give these wings to them, that will carry them away quite from among them. Jeremiah desired a lodge in the wilderness, that he might leave his people; but now he has got a lodging in heaven, where he can no more be uneasy from them, Jer. ix. 2.

The wicked are weary of the society of the godly; they desire it not, they are hampered with it, it is a burden to them. They will be quit of it in the other world, where they will see their faces no more, but afar off in Abraham's bosom, and at the last day in the air on Christ's right hand. The unpassable gulf will be between the one and the other for ever.

4. True lovers of the saints and holy society will be satisfied at length; and the lovers of the company of the ungodly will get their heart's fill of it. There is great stress laid upon our love of the godly for their godliness, Christians for Christ's sake, 1 John iii. 14. "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." Such will never get enough of their society here; but there they shall be led into an unmixed society of saints where is not one wicked person, not one sinner; and herewith they should not comfort themselves, while they dwell in the tents of Kedar. Their is great stress also laid on the love of ill company, Prov. xiii. 20.—"but a companion of fools shall be destroyed." Such will get a fill of it, when they come to the other world, to the society wherein is not one gracious person; when they shall be bundled together in punishment with those, with whom they have been bundled together in sin, Matth. xiii. 30.

Lastly, As ye would choose your habitation in the other world, choose your way now; for it is impossible that one way can lead to both. The way of faith and holiness leads to heaven, the way of unbelief, unholiness, and licentiousness leads to hell, Matth. vii. 13, 14, "Enter ye in at the strait gate," &c. Do not think ye can enter into life by the broad gate; for "without holiness no man shall see the Lord," Heb. xii. 14. Ye will join yourselves to those now, with whom ye will be joined for ever; therefore says the apostle to the believing Hebrews, "Ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the

city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels," &c. Heb. xii. 22—24. and says Solomon, "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise; but a companion of fools shall be destroyed," Prov. xiii. 20.

III. *Of the passage into the other world.*

As to the passage of unbodied spirits, to wit, angels good or bad, who sometimes are here, and depart again into the other world, we inquire not about it. But the passage into the other world for us mortals, is what we are concerned to know. Paul had a passage into it extraordinary for a visit; how that was, in or out of the body, he himself could not tell. It is for habitation, the passage into it, for our lasting abode, that concerns us. It is twofold.

First, One extraordinary, by a translation of soul and body into it. There have been three unquestionable instances of it, viz. of Enoch before the law, Gen. v. 24. Heb. xi. 5. of Elijah carried up by a whirlwind into heaven, 2 Kings ii. 11. under the law; and of Christ himself, who is said to have been taken up, Acts i. 9. But these were altogether extraordinary.

Secondly, The ordinary passage is by death, whether in the upper or lower part of the other world, as appears from the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, Luke xvi. Hence death is called a going hence, Psal. xxxix. ult. a departing, Luke ii. 29. viz. out of this world, John xiii. 1. Death dissolving the union betwixt the soul and the body, the soul, like a bird on the opening of the cage, gets away, and goes into the other world, departing either into heaven or hell, 2 Cor. v. 1. Phil. i. 23. Luke xvi. 22, 23. Of this passage we know little, and can only say these few things.

1. It is a quick passage, by which the soul is soon wafted over and landed on the other side. Whatever be the distance betwixt us and either part of the other world, as it is certain it is a vast distance betwixt us and the highest heavens, yet the departed soul soon passes it over, and is in its place there, as appears from Christ's saying to the penitent thief, Luke xxiii. 43, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise;" where the journey was not begun till three o'clock afternoon, ver. 44, 46. but accomplished that day. And there is no question, but it is much the same to the other part, which is the lower part of the other world.

2. The passengers are not left alone in it; but as at our coming forth of the womb into this world, there are some people of this world ready to receive us, and dispose of us; so at our going out of this world into the other, there are some of that world to receive us,

and attend us. So that however unknown the road is to us, we will not be alone in it. And,

1*st*, As to the souls of the godly passing into heaven, it is clear that it is so with them; and that,

(1.) The Lord Jesus himself is with them. The general promise secures this, Heb. xiii. 5, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." David was confident of it, Psal. xxiii. 4, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." This was typified by the ark's going before the people into Jordan, and staying there till they were all gone safe over. At the birth of the gracious soul into the world, the Lord Jesus himself is the party that receives it, Acts vii. 59.

(2.) That good angels are with them for their convoy. They attend them in their life, doing them many good offices unperceived, having a charge over them, Psal. xci. 11, "He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways." And can one imagine that they will be wanting to them on such a non-such occasion? If they are to keep them in all their ways, surely they will not leave them alone in their way betwixt the two worlds. They are ministering spirits to the apparent heirs of salvation, Heb. i. ult. Surely these heirs will not want their ministration, when they are to enter their inheritance.

They will carry them to heaven, Luke xvi. 22. And this may serve to account for the quickness of their passage, being carried by angels who for their speedy motions are said to fly, Isa. vi. 2, 6. Dan. ix. 21. Compare Psal. civ. 4. Ezek. i. 14.

2*dly*, As to the souls of the wicked passing into hell, that matter is not so very clear. The scripture speaks not of the rich glutton's attendants into his place in the other world, Luke. xvi. 22, 23. plainly intimating, that no comfortable or honourable attendance is for them. But yet it gives hints of their attendance by ill angels or devils, Job xxxiii. 22. and is positive that they are driven away, Prov. xiv. 32. And how can it be imagined, but the roaring lion, who is still going about seeking whom he may devour, will be ready to receive the prey when it is coming to his mouth?

3. It will be a strange and surprising passage. How strange will it be to the soul to find itself in a moment unbodied, that its body lies dropt in such a place, and it has no more communication with it! There will be surprises of wonder, at the sudden change in itself, and at the objects about it which it never saw before. The godly soul will be surprised with joy, in the happy change, the blessed attendants; and the wicked with horror at the unhappy change and the frightful society it now enters into.

Lastly, A passage where there is no repassing. It is without coming back till the great day. The godly would not, and the wicked shall not be able to return. It is a passage we have no access to make trial of, but once entering upon it, go forward for good and all, Heb. iv. 27.

Now when the soul is passed and gone into the other world, the body still remains in this, being laid up in the grave till the last day. But there it lies dead and motionless, having no more portion in what is done under the sun. But the body also must pass into the other world, and all mankind shall be inhabitants of that world at length in their bodies, as well as their souls. Of this we may note these few things.

1. The time appointed for it is the last day. Then, and not till then shall the bodies of men be transported thither, Matth. xxv. ult. They must sleep in the dust, till the end of the world, Job xiv. 12. and then be removed into the other world, for eternal inhabitants, not to remove any more.

2. Then shall they be raised up out of their graves for that passage, their souls being reunited to their bodies; so shall they awake out of their long sleep, Dan. xii. 2. Christ shall come again to judgment, and the trumpet shall sound, at which all the dead shall arise, their souls being by his mighty power returned into and united again to their bodies, John v. 28, 29. Then they shall rise to take their last farewell of this present world.

3. They shall be gathered together by the ministry of angels into two companies, the one to pass into the upper part, the other into the lower part of the other world, Mark xiii. 27. Mat. xiii. 40, 41. Thus every grave shall be emptied then, no place in the earth or sea shall hold back any of its dead, Rev. xx. 13. and being brought forth, none of them shall be lost by the way unto the place where the judgment will be, all shall be brought thither, Rom. xiv. 10. good and bad, from all corners of the earth and sea.

4. The fair company of Christ's sheep shall be caught up from this cursed earth never to set a foot on it more, into the clouds, and there in the air be set on Christ's right hand, 1 Thess. iv. 17. Thus they are so far in their way to the other world. And the reprobate goats shall be left standing on their own earth, upon Christ's left hand, Matth. xxiv. 40. the nearer perhaps to their part of the other world. And this will be the last station that ever they will have upon it.

5. Christ will, by a sentence from the throne, adjudge the righteous unto the upper part of the other world, after due cognisance taken of their case, Matth. xxv. 34. "Then shall the King say unto

them on his right hand, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." And by a sentence from the same he will adjudge the wicked into the lower part of it, ver. 41. "Then shall he say also to them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." So there is no more use for this world, but saints and sinners must leave it now, having got their route for the other world.

Lastly, Immediately the wicked pass away into hell in one company together, there to receive eternal punishment; and then the godly having seen them turn their backs and go away, do go off into heaven with Christ. And then comes the general conflagration, succeeded with the creation of the new heavens and earth.

Inf. 1. Death is a matter of the highest importance to all, as being the passage into the other world. As none of us can miss to die, so none of us can miss to pass out of this world into the other. Ah! why then are we so unmindful of it? Why do we not set ourselves more to prepare ourselves for it? Why are we so much concerned for this world that we must leave, and so little for that world we must depart to? Pass we must, but cannot return: what is but once to be done, had need to be well done.

2. Though dying is in itself an awful thing, yet to the godly it is most safe and comfortable. They have a happy lodging on the other side, and they will get a joyful convoy thither. To look into the waters is frightful; but they have a firm ground to the believers, and they are not so deep as they look to be. It is an awful thought, to think of that moment when the soul drops the body, and passes into the other world; but Christ is ready to receive the believer's soul, and the angels to welcome and attend it into their world of bliss.

3. Death, however dreadful it is in itself, is far more dreadful in its consequences to the ungodly. Were there no more for them but to die, and so to be done, or cease to be, it would be more tolerable. But the horrible place they pass into in the other world, the frightful state abiding them there, is fearful beyond expression. What moment they are expiring, they are waited for of the destroyers, to be driven away in their wickedness.

Lastly, All of us have certainly greater interest and concern in the other world than in this. For here we are but passengers, there we will be eternal inhabitants. And not only is the greatest concern for our souls there, but even our bodies too.

IV. *Of the state of men in the other world.*

I proceed now to the last head I proposed to consider, namely, The state of men in the other world. And in handling of this weighty subject, two things must be inquired into.

1. The state of separate souls in the other world.
2. The state of soul and body reunited.

Of both which in order.

I. *Of the State of separate Souls in the other world.*

The state of separate souls commences at death, whereby the separation is made, and continues until the resurrection, when the soul and body are reunited. Which state therefore can have no place, where death has not place, as in those whom Christ coming again will find alive on the earth. For clearing of this branch, we shall,

1. Inquire into the state of separate souls in the other world in general.

2. Consider the different states of separate souls in the different parts of that world.

I. We shall inquire into the state of separate souls in the other world in general. And,

1. They are in a state of activity, and not asleep, without life, sense, understanding, and action, as some profane men would have it. That is the state of the body indeed after death, but not of the soul, which is of a spiritual and active nature. The separate souls of the saints are not asleep but with the Lord, 2 Cor. v. 8; Phil. i. 23. whereby the scripture expresseth a state of happiness, 1 Thess. iv. 17. Neither are the separate souls of the ungodly asleep, as is evident from the case of the rich man in hell, Luke xvi. 23—25.

2. They are totally and finally removed from the business of this world, Eccl. ix. 6. Whatever their activity be, they act no more in those things that are the affairs of this life. Death puts an end to all that with them, Psal. cxlvi. 4. and therefore they are said to rest from their labours, being freed from the business and troubles of this life. Accordingly, whatever they possessed while here in life, their interest therein is expired, Luke xii. 20. However careful and busy they have been in these, death puts a final stop thereto in a moment.

3. Their activity is wholly intellectual and spiritual, as that of the angels good or bad, Matth. xxii. 30. They are then divested of their bodies, and so can use them no more than if they had no manner of concern in them. The body furnishes all men with a business, what to eat and drink, wherewith to be clothed, where to

lodge, how to provide for themselves and families; and this is the whole business of many. But in the other world all that is scored off. Only the spiritual faculties, of understanding, conscience, will, and memory, last; and those will afford them employment and continual action, Luke xvi. 25.

4. Their knowledge is exceedingly enlarged, their faculties are cleared beyond what they were in this life, either to their happiness or misery. The clay body being fallen down from about the soul, it will see far more clearly than before. The mist that arose from this vain world unto them, will then be scattered. The other world they only heard of before, they will then see, and know the truth of what was reported from the word, by their own experience. Whatever be the ignorance prevailing in this world, there is none there but will know at another rate than now, what God, Christ, sin, &c. are.

5. They are in a social state, and not solitary, they are in company with other spirits. The other world is doubtless a throng world, thronger than this, whether we view it in the upper or lower part; for there all past generations of men are, here is one generation only. The saints go into a blessed society, Heb. xii. 7. and the wicked have their numerous society in the other world too, Luke xvi. 28.

Lastly, They are in a determinate unalterable state, and can never change seats more, Luke xvi. 29. Now we are in a state of trial in this world, but in the other world they are at their journey's end. The tree is fallen, and must lie for ever as it has fallen. In heaven there is no need of repentance, and in hell there is no place for it. Death determines our eternal state. If one is well in the other world, he is well for ever; if he is ill there, he is so for ever.

II. Let us now consider the different states of separate souls in the different parts of the other world, *viz.* heaven and hell.

FIRST, Of the state of separate souls in heaven.

1. They are perfect in holiness there, Heb. xii. 23. In death dropping their bodies, they drop also the body of sin and death, that they may enter the new Jerusalem where no unclean thing can enter. Then there is a full application of the blood of Christ to them, which in a moment makes them perfectly clean. So there they shine in the glory of the perfection of the divine image in them. There is no more darkness in their minds, rebellion in their wills, or carnality in their affections. The guilt, power, defilement, and indwelling of sin, are wholly and for ever removed.

2. They are in a state of rest there, xiv. 13. Their wearisome toil and labour which they had with the troubles of this world, is at

an end, never to return; the weary work they had in fighting against sin, their watching, mourning, groaning, &c. thereby occasioned, are all away. They are got through the weary wilderness and Jordan, and are now seated in Canaan above. The victory is obtained, and the sword is laid by.

3. They are with the Lord there, 2 Cor. v. 8. They have the glorious presence of God and Christ there. That Jesus in whom they believed, and whom their soul loved while unseen, they see now, for they are with him, Phil. i. 23. That God to whom their souls tended in faith and love while here, they are now admitted to see his face, which is the privilege of the inhabitants in heaven, Matth. xviii. 10. 1 Cor. xiii. 12. They see all of him necessary to satisfy a soul, and they see him as their own God, and hence arise perfect ease, rest, and satisfaction; and they no more miss the comforts and conveniences of this life than one does a candle when the sun shines in his meridian brightness.

4. They are in a family of love there. Heaven is the place of love, and there it will endure for ever, when faith is turned into sight, and hope to enjoyment, 1 Cor. xiii. 8. No society can be happy without a bond of love; and there is so little love in this world, that it is a miserable world; but all flames with love in the other world; God lets out his love to the saints there, and they flame in love to him again. They live in love with the angels, and warm is that love which these now ministering spirits bear to the heirs of salvation, and which these heirs have one to another in that world. Hence is Abraham's bosom. For there holiness is perfected, and their love both to God and one another.

5. They are in a state of joy, pleasure, and delight there, Psal. xvi. ult. Matth. xxv. 21. While we are here, there is a difficulty of joy entering into us, we are so beset with causes of sorrow; but there the saints are entered into joy; there is an ocean of joy there, nothing but joy wheresoever they look. They had their weeping time here, now they are comforted; never a sorrowful thought can take place with them more. The dreggy pleasures of sin and sense are not there, but spiritual pleasures are there in fulness; and these doubtless, are the far more exquisite, as our souls are more penetrating than our senses.

6. They are in a state of holy exercise there, Rev. iv. 8. Heaven's rest is not a lazy rest of idleness, but it is a sabbath's rest, wherein they are employed in pleasurable and refreshful exercises; therefore they are said to walk with him in white, to be led to living fountains of waters. Their proper work is praise; there they sing the new song, to the glory of God, and their own eternal delight.

7. They know that their happiness shall never be lost or diminished, however it may be enlarged, Rev. xxi. 5. So they are perfectly secure there, as in a state of unalterable felicity. Thus the view of the endless ages of eternity must give them a new pleasure and satisfaction, upon every reflection thereon: while they know it will spin out their happiness for ever.

8. *Lastly*, They have the comfortable expectation of the additional happiness waiting them at the last day. Now they have the first fruits of bliss, and they see the full harvest is coming, Rev. vi. 11. The separated souls of the saints are in firm expectation of their reunion with their bodies, and the glorious resurrection of the body; their meeting the Lord in the air in their bodies, their standing on his right hand, and receiving the final sentence, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you, from the foundation of the world."

SECONDLY, The state of separate souls in hell.

1. They are in a settled state of sin there, Prov. xiv. 32. "The wicked is driven away in his wickedness." They are in a state of sin here, it is true; but then it is not such a settled state, but they may get out of it. There are offers of Christ made to them, whereby their guilt may be removed, &c. But then their guilt, defilement, the dominion, and indwelling of sin, are left on them never to be removed. Then is said concerning them, "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still," Rev. xxii. 11. There are no offers of the despised blood and Spirit of Christ there, no voice of a Saviour and salvation. The backsliders are there filled with their own ways.

2. They are in prison there, reserved to the judgment of the great day, 1 Pet. iii. 19. There was a time wherein they ran on in a course of crimes against God, who suffered them, some longer, some shorter, while, but death came and arrested them, and the souls of the criminals were committed to the prison in hell, out of which there is no escape. There they are prisoners in the pit, with the filth of their sin as their prison garments on them, never to be changed.

3. They are in a state of torment there, Luke xvi. 23. They took their rest, while they should have been busy for salvation; and now they have no rest, Rev. xiv. 11. They slept in seed-time, and they are left in a starving condition now. Wrath from the Lord has seized them, as his enemies, and is let in in floods into their souls. They have a memory, wherewith now they can call to mind what way they passed the time of this life; they have a conscience that is now awake, and is to them a never-dying worm. Nothing now

remains with them of their sins, but what is tormenting; all pleasurable passions are now rooted out of them, and tormenting ones only remain.

4. They are in a state of desperation there, Matth. xxii. 13. "Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." They had some hopes while here; though they were but false hopes, they made them easy. But now all hope is plucked up by the roots with them, and it is not possible they can hope any more. And O how cutting must the despair be in hell, it being absolute! While men are here, when all hopes of the removal of trouble are cut off, they know that death is coming, and that will end it. But they that are in the other world know that their state is eternal, and despair for ever. This cannot fail to heighten their sin, being no more in circumstances for counterfeiting love to God, or regard to his commandments.

Lastly, They have the fearful expectation of the additional misery waiting them at the last day. It seems to be pretty plain, that the damned are not quite so miserable now, as they will be after the resurrection and last judgment for ever. For,

1*st*, This may be gathered from scripture testimony. The rich man in the parable, Luke xvi. was afraid of further torments, ver. 28. The devils are cast down to hell, 2 Pet. ii. 4; but there they are reserved unto judgment, as malefactors reserved in prison till the day of execution; and they are in expectation of a time of further torment, Matth. viii. 29. and tremble in view of it, Jam. ii. 19. And at the last day, reprobate men must depart with them into the same fiery torments, Matth. xxvi. 41. and consequently into greater than they now have.

2*dly*, It appears from the very nature of the thing. For whereas their bodies are now at ease in the grave, they also must then be tormented. So they must needs be in fearful expectation of the sounding of the last trumpet, the resurrection of their bodies, their station at the Judge's left hand, and the dreadful final sentence, and the execution thereof. So the difference seems to be betwixt their present and future state, as betwixt malefactors in chains in the dungeon, and their being led forth to execution.

The reasons hereof are,

(1.) At the end of the world, there is to be a general judgment, wherein they are to receive their final sentence; and there must be something reserved to be the effect thereof, that was not before. Then wrath comes on to the uttermost, as being the time of the last pouring out of the indignation, appearing in the general conflagra-

tion, and sweeping away all sin and effects of sin from all other quarters, into hell with the damned themselves, Rev. xx. 14. So that these things now scattered through the creation, will be gathered together, and lodged in and with them.

(2.) The cup of the sin of the damned may be yet a filling up to the last day. I mean not this as their personal sinning in hell, but as to their current guilt in this world, when they are away out of it, for which they must then answer; for a man's sin may be living and active, when he is dead and gone; as the observation of all ages testifies, seeing the world much the worse of some that are dead and away out of it. Is not Adam's sin, which has run more than five thousand years in the world already, running still and infecting his posterity, and will to the world's end! for which he needed a pardon and has no doubt got it.

It is a certain truth, that rational agents are accountable for the native consequences of their actions, Exod. xxi. 33, 34. And it is as certain, that there may be a train of mischievous consequences following men's sin in the world after they are departed; and can one imagine that wicked men shall not be made to answer for these? Should one lay a train for blowing up a house, which yet should not work till he were got many miles off; or one give poison to another, which yet should not kill till some years after; would not such be held murderers, and punished accordingly? No doubt of it. So is the case here.

There are four cases particularly among others, wherein men's guilt may be increased after they are dead, and their accounts enlarged against the great day.

[1.] Their being authors of any evil, springs of mischief, as Jeroboam was, 2 Kings xvii. 22, 23. Inventers of evil things are branded with ignominy by the Spirit of God, however they may pride themselves therein. Such are contrivers and makers of wicked laws, whereby multitudes are driven to sin; introducers of ill customs into nations, congregations, or families, whereby a course of sin is set a-going, and the older it grows gathers the more strength, and may last many generations, perhaps to the end of time. But all the sin and misery following on such actions, will be chargeable on the author.

[2.] The case of injustice, whether by stealing, cheating, oppression, or defrauding any manner of way, where restitution is not made, especially where men leave such ill-gotten goods to theirs after them. For this is a continued stream of injustice running from time to time, for right can never rise from wrong in the sight of God. And the loss and misery thereby coming to the children

and friends of the injured from generation to generation, is still chargeable on the unjust man, till restitution is made, Job xx. 9, 10. This may account for apparitions of persons departed, ordering restitution.

[3.] The case of companionship in sin, such as is the case of drunkards, unclean persons, and all social sinners, who ruin others together with themselves: for at their door the ruin of their companions in sin must lie, if they be ruined. Therefore the rich man in hell wished his five brethren might get repentance, Luke xvi. 27, 28. knowing that while they did not repent, he was chargeable with their ruin; and that would increase his torment, if he should have the blood of their souls to answer for too, at the last day, Matth. xiii. 30. for in burning bundles, each stick makes the other burn the more keenly.

[4.] *Lastly*, The case of ill example, Matth. xviii. 7. They who in words, actions, or behaviour, set an ill copy to others, they will not readily in a sinful world miss some to write after them, following their criminal example. But the more followers they get, the greater will be their guilt; and the longer they are followed, the longer will their accounts run on, even as long as they are followed, though dead and gone. And it is often seen, that the ill example of parents especially runs in a train of sin from generation to generation.

Thus it is evident, that the cup of the sin of the damned may be increasing or filling up after death; and if so, their torment will be increased accordingly against the day of final reckoning. And they may know their sin to be still going on in the world, while it is not in their power to stop its course; and therefore they cannot miss fearful expectations of additional misery against the last day.

Thus far of the state of separate souls in the other world.

II. *Of the State of Soul and Body reunited, in the other World.*

Having spoken of the state of separate souls in the other world, we come now to inquire into the state of soul and body reunited. And for clearing of this also, we shall,

1. Inquire into the state of reunited souls and bodies in general.

2. Consider the different states of reunited souls and bodies, in the other world.

I. We are to inquire into the state of reunited souls and bodies, or whole men, in the other world, in general. This state takes place after the resurrection, general judgment, conflagration, and departure of the righteous and wicked, each into the respective

places of their eternal abode in the other world, and continues for ever. And we may view it in the following particulars.

1. They shall be in a state of living for ever and ever. As separate souls do not sleep, from death till the resurrection; so the soul and body then reunited shall never be dissolved again; so the whole man shall be in life for ever from the moment of the resurrection; there will be no graves in the other world, but the great one, hell, where all the wicked will be together buried alive. That the saints in heaven will ever live, is evident. That the damned in hell will be eternally alive too, appears from this that their punishment of sense there will be without end, Matth. xxv. ult. with ver. 41. Rev. xx. 10. It is true, the state of the damned is called a state of death, and eternal destruction; but it is so called only in opposition to a happy life and state of salvation. Their life will be a death; they will be ever dying, but never die out; otherwise their pain of sense could not be eternal. So it is in the other world, where we are to live indeed, to live without dying.

2. We will live there in the same bodies we live in here. The very term resurrection implies this. If there were other bodies that were to be made for us, that would be a creation, but not a resurrection of the body. It is this mortal, this vile body, that will be raised for us to live in there, 1 Cor. xv. 53. Phil. iii. 21. Besides, it is inconsistent with the divine equity, that the bodies of the saints, the temples of his Spirit, that were employed in his service, should be left in the dust, and other bodies glorified; and that the bodies that sinned should lie at ease, and other bodies suffer in hell. And surely it is as easy for Omnipotence to raise the old body, as create a new one.

3. But we will live there without the means of life, now in use with us. Now the body that is to die must be daily held up by the appointed means of life; the clay tabernacle needs more mud and earth to patch it up with every now and then. But in the other world our bodies will be supported without them. There will be no use of meat and drink there, 1 Cor. vi. 13. The saints in glory shall be satisfied without them, Rev. vii. 16. "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more;" and the damned, even those that had their full tables and fine liquors, whatever need they may have of them, shall not for ever have the favour of a drop of water, Luke xvi. Now much time is spent by saints and sinners in sleep; but there will be no sleeping there, Rev. iv. 8. and xiv. 11. They are miserable men who know no other, or better comforts than these.

4. The business and affairs of this life have no place there. Solomon observes, that all the labour of man is for his mouth, Eccl. vi.

7. But though we will have our bodies there, there will be no eating and drinking there; and that will cut off that labour there; there will be no ploughing, sowing, and reaping, and other business depending thereon. There will be no business there for clothing, and housing. There is a quite new state of matters there, Rev. xxi. 5. The affairs of this life are for our trial in the way; but then we will be come to our journey's end; and our entertainment there will be a reward according to our works done here.

5. Earthly relations will be dissolved there, death puts an end to them, Job iii. 18, 19. and they will not be made up again at the resurrection, Matth. xxii. 30. There will be a general levelling in the other world; no difference left among men, but what piety or wickedness has made. There the servant and the master will be alike in other respects, and every burdened one will bear his own burden alone. There will be no more husband and wife there; for then the mystery of God is finished, and the number is made up to receive no further addition.

6. We will be separated and sorted there into two very different societies, places, and states, Matth. xxv. ult. Now persons and things in this world, good and bad, are mixed, as in a corn-field where grow wheat and tares together; but in the other world there will be no such mixture; every one will be disposed of there in the due order, to be with Christ or with the devil, in heaven or hell, perfectly happy or completely miserable. And each part of that world will be stocked with inhabitants vastly more numerous than ever this world was; since all generations of the righteous will be in heaven, and all generations of the wicked will be in hell.

7. There will be no communication or intercourse betwixt the two societies, Luke xvi. 19. The saints in heaven will know the misery of the damned, and the damned will know the happiness of the saints, as appears from that parable; but there will be no passage from the one place to the other. The impassable gulf between them will bar all communication. The saints will not desire to go into the place and company of the damned: and the pit with her bars will be about the damned for ever, that they cannot get out into the place and society of the saints.

Lastly, Our first state there will be eternal, Matth. xxv. ult. There will be no end of the happiness of the saints, and no end of the misery of the damned. The world to come will ever be so; when millions of ages are past, it will be as far from an end as at its beginning, for it will have no end.

Inf. Let us look forward unto the life we are to have in the other world after the resurrection, and consider that the manner of

life we have here is passing, Let them no more be our main questions, What shall we eat? What shall we drink? and, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? for the time will come when these things shall be in eternal disuse. Let us not sink our minds into the affairs of this life; for a little time will put an end to them. Let us improve the relations we stand in for our personal well-being in another world, and beware they be not ruining snares to us. Let us now separate ourselves from this world lying in wickedness, as we would not be eternally separated with them from the society of the saints.

II. We shall now consider the different states of reunited souls and bodies in the other world; namely, in heaven and hell. And,

FIRST, Of the state of men, soul and body, in heaven. In the general, they will be in a state of complete happiness of the whole man there. Betwixt death and the resurrection, they are happy, but incompletely; the one half of the man, the soul, is happy; but the other half of the man, the body, lies in the dust. But the bodies of the saints being raised at the last day, they will be completely happy in the whole man.

1. They will be in an inconceivably-happy place there, Rev. xxi. 10, 11. We spoke something of the place already; but certainly it is a place happy beyond what we can conceive while here. It is a paradise for pleasure, a kingdom for spaciousness, a palace for splendour and glory, and a Father's house for kindness. The most pleasant places of this world are but a wilderness in comparison with it, a strange country to the saints.

2. They will be in eternal uninterrupted light there. Truly light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun; but how much more sweet must the light of heaven be, that so far outdoes the light of the sun, that our mortal bodies which bear the one, are not able for the other? 1 Tim. vi. 16. And no wonder, for it is not the sun, but the Lamb, not the rays of light from the sun or moon, but the glory of God himself, that lightens heaven, Rev. xxi. 23. Hence there is no night there, no darkness for ever, but an eternal day. Our sun cannot enlighten our whole globe at once, but when it is day in one hemisphere, it is night in the other. But what can set bounds to the glory of an infinite God, that lightens it?

3. They will be free from, and beyond the reach of all evil there. There will be no hazard from within, and none from without, Rev. xxi. 25. They will be free of sin there; there will be no body of death to molest them in that place; they will have no inclination to sin more; no temptation can reach them there; nay there is no possibility of their sinning there being confirmed in a state of per-

fection through the merit of Christ. They will be freed from all their troubles and sufferings there; they are beyond the reach of devils and wicked men, and the time of the Lord's trying them is over and ended.

4. There are no wants to them there, Rev. vii. 16. They have a needy life of it here, but there all their wants will be made up. Their long complaints will then be eternally silenced. There will be no wants of the things of this life, more than of a candle in the brightest sunshine; there will be no wants of spiritual enjoyments, no desertions, or hiding of God's face there. There are many things in this world that will not be in heaven; but all that they will or can desire, will be there for them, and therefore they can be in no want there. There would be wants in heaven to the wicked, whose desires are not regulated; so that they could not be happy there. But there will be none to the saints.

5. All imperfections and badges of imperfection shall be done away there. Whatever denotes the imperfection of our state here, shall be removed there; insomuch that the ordinances of preaching the word, the sacraments, &c. shall be honourably laid aside, even as the scaffolding is taken down when the house is built; the occasional graces of the Spirit, such as patience, &c. duties, such as watching, mourning, for sin, &c. are laid aside, as the sword when the war is over. Faith is turned into sight, and hope into enjoyment.

6. There will be a confluence of all good in their state there, necessary to make them completely happy.

1*st*, The constitution of their bodies will be heavenly, 1 Cor. xv. 43. So that the case of the saints' bodies will in that world be as far preferable to their case now, as heaven is to earth. Their bodies now are a spring of much sin, sorrow, and trouble to them; but then will their bodies be advanced into a state of perfect happiness, as well as their souls.

This will come to pass, through the reforming of their bodies in the likeness of Christ's glorious body, at the resurrection, Phil. iii. 21. The bodies of all are now fashioned in the likeness of the first Adam, and of him fallen, 1 Cor. xv. 47, 48. for he is the father of us all, the father of our flesh, Acts xvii. 26. And so our bodies are mortal, inglorious, weak, and earthly, like his. But the bodies of believers are melted down in a grave, till they are reduced to dust again, and every the least lineament of Adam's image is gone; then at the resurrection Christ takes their dust and forms it into a body like unto his own, the body of the second Adam; and in this new fashion and frame it continues for ever after in the other world. So the bodies of the saints will be,

(1.) Incorruptible there, 1 Cor. xv. 42. as the body of Christ is. They will be no more liable to death nor diseases. No pains, nor uneasiness can affect them any more; nothing will be about them for ever that may create loathing to themselves or others; neither will they be liable to be worn with age; but they will be in perfect soundness for ever.

(2.) They will be glorious bodies there, 1 Cor. xv. 43. The inhabitants of heaven will all of them be beauties, perfect beauties, without a metaphor. They are now all glorious within, though some of them be hard favoured, and others of them deformed, naturally or accidentally; then they will be all glorious without too; not only beautiful in their faces, but the whole body over, Matth. xiii. 43, "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun, in the kingdom of their Father." There will be a heavenly glory on their whole bodies, making them amiable and lovely, surpassing the most framed beauties now as the light of the sun doth the shining of a candle. This will be their clothing, and other clothing they will need none, 2 Cor. v. 2.

(3.) They will be powerful and strong bodies, 1 Cor. xv. 43. All flesh now is grass, weak and withering: but there will be no weakness nor weariness there; nay, the now weak and feeble saint shall be as David, and David as the angel of God. How else would they be fit for the eternal weight of glory, for continual uninterrupted exercise? 1 Cor. xv. 50. The strongest man would be unable to bear the heavenly glory; the clay tabernacle in its present state would fly all in pieces; but they will be able to bear it.

(4.) They will be spiritual bodies, 1 Cor. xv. 44. They will be true bodies still, but endowed with spirit-like qualities. They will be no more clogs to the soul, but as ready and fit for the exercise of heaven, as if they were spirits. Naturalists observe, that bodies the more they are raised from the earth towards heaven, the lighter they become; surely then when they are in the highest heaven, their weight and ponderousness must be gone. They are spiritual bodies.

2*dly*, Their souls in their bodies will shine in their purity and perfection of the divine image, 1 John iii. 2, "When he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." At death the souls of the saints are so glorified, however inglorious they were while in the body. But being housed again in their glorified bodies, they will retain their heavenly lustre for ever, shining there as the candle through the lantern. And here,

(1.) Their understanding will be perfect for ever, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. "Now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face; now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known."

No more scales of ignorance will then be on the eyes of their understanding. Their capacity will be enlarged, to know God and his works.

(2.) Their will, will be perfectly conformed to the will of God, and completely satisfied, having all that they would have, and as they would have it. Then will be said to every saint, without limitation, "Be it unto thee even as thou wilt." They shall never know more what it is to be balked of their will for ever. Psal. xvii. ult. "As for me I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness."

(3.) Their affections shall all be perfectly heavenly. All uneasy and unpleasant affections will be discarded there; no sorrow shall ever spring up in them more, Rev. xxi. 4, "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain." All earthly affections shall be for ever laid aside; the dregginess of them makes them unmeet for the heavenly state; and they shall no more be able to pick on them, than our dunghills can on the sun, Matth. xxii. 30, "For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are as the angels of God in heaven." They will be all love, loving God in perfection, and all persons and things else in him only.

(4.) Their memory of things past will be fresh. It will be so with the damned in hell, Luke xvi. 25, 28. And how can it be doubted as to the saints in heaven, in a state of perfection? No sorrowful reflection indeed can have place in their state, but things sometimes sorrowful will be remembered with joy in the deliverance therefrom. And the looking back into their wilderness-state, their stormy voyage through the sea of this world, will fill them with wonder and praise. They will remember the times, places, means, and instruments of their acquaintance with Christ, and communion with God in the world, by which they have been brought to all that happiness, Luke xvi. 9. 1 Thess. ii. 19.

(5.) *Lastly*, They will have an executive faculty answering to their will. Now the spirit may be willing, but the flesh is weak; so that they cannot do what they fain would; but find themselves like a bird with a stone tied to its foot, that aims to fly, but cannot. But there they shall be able to put in execution whatever they will do or desire to do.

3*dly*, They will be happy in the glorious society of heaven, being joint inhabitants with them there.

(1.) They will have the society of one another there, being all gathered together into one lovely company, the general assembly of

the first born, Heb. xii. 21. All the saints that from the beginning to the end of the world shall have lived in any part of the earth, will be altogether there, an innumerable multitude of the redeemed, all shining ones. And since they are in a state of perfection, I wonder how it can be questioned, but they will know one another, their friends and acquaintance on earth, and get new acquaintance and knowledge of those at least that have been most eminent in the church on earth; or how the use of speech and conversation among them can be doubted.

(2.) They will have the society of the holy angels there, Heb. xii. 22. They will be no more afraid of angels, when they themselves are become their equals, Luke xx. 36. But they will join them in the heavenly choir, singing their hallelujahs. And whether angels shall assume airy bodies for conversing with the saints or not, there is no reason to think that they will be in a place with the angels, and yet incapable of conversing with them.

(3.) They will have the society of the man Christ there, 1 Thess. iv. 17, "So shall we ever be with the Lord." They will see him with their bodily eyes, who loved them, and gave himself for them: they will see that very body that was for them crucified without the gates of Jerusalem. They will see him there shining in inconceivable glory, as their Lord, Saviour, and Redeemer; and compass his throne for ever with songs of salvation.

Lastly, They will have the presence and full enjoyment of God in Christ there, Rev. xxi. 7, "He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he shall be my son." Here is the highest pinnacle of the saints' happiness in heaven; without this they cannot be happy completely, no not in heaven; and in the full enjoyment of him, they will be so happy, that it is impossible they can desire more for the satisfying of them. For he is an ocean of unbounded perfection. It lies in two things.

[1.] They will enjoy God in Christ, by sight of the divine glory, to the complete satisfying of their understanding, Matth. v. 8, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." The sight they will have of the divine glory is a full and clear knowledge of God, to the utmost of their enlarged capacities, as by seeing face to face, Rev. xxii. 4. 1 Cor. xiii. 12. What heart can conceive the happiness of being freely let into the view of the infinite divine perfections! Men have a mighty satisfaction in the sight of taking objects, as a curious garden, a splendid palace; but we are swallowed up when we think of being let into the view of the infinite divine perfections, where there must be something always new.

[2.] They will enjoy God in Christ, by experience of the divine

goodness, to the complete satisfying of their will, Rev. vii. 16, 17, "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more;—for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters." There is an all-fulness of goodness in God, an inexhaustible fountain of it, and they shall have an unrestrained participation of it, Psal. xxxvi. 8, 9, "They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures. For with thee is the fountain of life; in thy light shall we see light." Rev. xxi. 3, "Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God." He will make of his goodness to flow into them for ever, and there shall be nothing to hinder them from all of it they can desire. And it is impossible they can desire any thing beyond it.

4*thly*, They will have a fulness of joy there, Psal. xvi. 11. Rivers of pleasures run in Immanuel's land. Joy unspeakable shall fill their hearts for ever, and appear in the countenances, where never again shall the least cloud of sorrows sit down. Now is the sowing time of tears, but then is the reaping time of joy; and that harvest wherein they bring back their sheaves rejoicing, will never be over.

5*thly*, All their happiness, joy, and glory, they will have eternally through Christ, as the great means of communication betwixt God and them, Rev. xxi. 23. "And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it; for the glory of the Lord did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." They will continue for ever members of Christ, and members as members must needs live by communication with the head. So that the immediate enjoyment of God in heaven, is to be understood only in opposition to the intervening of outward means.

6*thly*, There will be degrees of glory among them, 1 Cor. xv. 41, 42. "There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead." The reward will be according to, though not for their works; and they who have glorified God most by suffering or acting for him, will be the more highly advanced in glory by him, Luke xix. 17, 19. Howbeit all of them will have what they can hold, the least as well as the greatest, as when bottles of different sizes are filled.

7*thly*, They shall be perfectly sure, that this their happy state shall last for ever. They know it now by faith in the word, how can they doubt of it then in a state of perfection? Their having any doubt of it could not but breed some anxiety, inconsistent with perfect happiness.

Lastly, Then shall the chief, last, or farthest end of man, be reached. And that is the glory of God, for which end they are made completely happy, in the full enjoyment of God, Prov. xvi. 4; Rom. xi. ult. So being made perfectly happy, they will answer that end in glorifying God, by loving, praising, and serving him perfectly, to all eternity, Psal. lxxxvi. 12, 13. "I will praise thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart: and I will glorify thy name for evermore. For great is thy mercy toward me; and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell." Rev. vii. 9, 10. "After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." Ver. 15. "Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he that sitteth in the throne shall dwell among them." Chap. xxii. 3. "And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him.

Inf. 1. Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. He is the best of masters, whatever hardships his servants be put to here. Heaven will make amends for all.

2. They who are truly godly do best consult not only the welfare of their souls, but of their bodies too. The way of faith and holiness is the way to reach the cure of all maladies at length; it is the way to get a sound body, with all the advantages of strength, comeliness, liveliness, &c.

Lastly, The faith of this should arm believers against the terror of death and the grave. Why not melt down the old crazy vessel, to be new shaped?

SECONDLY, Let us next view the state of men, soul and body in hell. Having viewed the state of men after the resurrection in the happy part of the other world, we must now consider the state of men after the resurrection in the regions of horror in the other world. An awful subject! but necessary. That part of mankind that shall justly be doomed to that part of the other world, will be absolutely miserable there. Concerning which these following things may be considered.

1. They will be totally and finally separated from God there, excommunicated from his presence, Matth. xxv. 41. Now they say to God, "Depart from us," while he is following them with mercy and offers of peace; then they will be wholly and for ever put away.

And this is the punishment of loss. There are these six things in it.

(1.) They will have no part in the habitation of the just, Matth. viii. 11, 12. They will have no footing in the better country, no seat in the mansions of glory. They will lose heaven, the seat of the blessed; and while the godly are taken within the city, they cannot enter the gates, but must lodge without for ever, Rev. xxi. 15.

(2.) They will be excommunicated from the presence of the saints, and have no share in the happy society. They cared not for their company here, if it was not to serve a turn; and there they shall be freely parted for ever. The company of the righteous being gone into the marriage, the door is bolted against them, that they cannot get in, no not if it were to lie among their feet, Matth. xxv. 10.

(3.) They will be excluded from the presence of the holy angels. They will have at the resurrection a terrible meeting with them, Matth. xiii. 49. and a more dreadful parting with them, ver. 50. never to meet again. It is another kind of angels with whom they must eternally lodge.

(4.) They will be locally separated from the man Christ. They shall never come into the place where he shines in his glory. He will effectually order their getting away out of his presence, by a terrible voice from his throne, Matth. xxv. 41. "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." And they shall go away one way, and he another with his saints; and they shall never meet again. However he courted them in this world, and they still fled from him, and would have none of him, they will never have a good word for them or to them, from him any more.

(5.) They will be relatively separated from God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. They cannot be locally separated from him, who is every where present, in hell as well as in heaven, Psal. cxxxix. 8. But there will be a relative separation, in an eternal blocking up of all comfortable communication between God and them; as when parties break up a treaty of peace, and part with hostile mind, proclaiming war against one another. Now though God is not their God by covenant, yet he is their Benefactor, and they get much benefit by that relation, Luke vi. 35. But then it is broke off for ever.

Lastly, They will be for ever under a total eclipse of all light of comfort and ease spiritual and bodily, Matth. xxii. 13. "Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him away into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Hos. ix. 12. "Wo also to them when I depart from them." Whatever good thing in body or mind they now enjoy is from God, as the light is from the sun; and therefore God totally withdrawing from, it is im-

possible that any thing good or comfortable can remain with them; but even as when there is but one chink in a house to let in the light, and that is stopt, there must needs be a total darkness.

2. They will be miserable both in body and soul there; for they must depart into everlasting fire, Matth. xxv. 41. How can it be otherwise in the lake of fire and brimstone, as it is called? Rev. xx. 10.

As to the state of their bodies there, though they be new-framed of their dust, yet it will be to no advantage but to fit them for a state of eternal misery. And we may take a view of it in these three things.

(1.) Their bodies will be base, inglorious, and loathsome, Dan. xii. 2. "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake—some to shame and everlasting contempt." Isa. lxv. 24. "And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcases of the men that have transgressed against me; for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched, and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh." No beauty can possibly be found in them there, but their countenance will be for ever ghastly and frightful, as in the pangs of the second death. They will be like so many dead carcases there for unsightliness, while death preys on them there buried out of the sight of all, in the pit of destruction.

(2.) There will be no health nor soundness in them there. How can there be in bodies suffering the vengeance of eternal fire? What hale side can one have to turn him to, swimming in a lake of fire? They will be in torments, Luke xvi. 23.

(3.) Yet will they be of such a constitution as to bear up, and not faint away under their torments there, Matth, xxv. ult. They will ever be in the pangs of death, but never die out. The power of God will keep them up in that case, that they shall not have the favour of fainting nor dying out.

As to the state of their souls in their bodies there.

(1.) Their minds or understandings will be fitted to carry on their misery there. They will be impressed there with clear notions of things, that here they either know not, or would not know; but then they will only be so known as to aggravate their misery, Luke xvi. 23, "And in hell he lift up his eyes—and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom." They will know then what God is, Christ, sin, heaven, hell, and this world then past. Their minds will then be fixed and active; fixed on their misery, and active in turning it about in all its shapes, without possibility of diversion from the thoughts of it. The impressions of wrath will be deep there.

(2.) Their will, as it will for ever continue enmity against God, so it will be crossed for ever by him. What they would, they shall never obtain; and what they would not, shall be eternally bound on them. In the state of trial they would needs have their will, and many times they got it; but they will get it no more, when once there; the will of God will resist it for ever. Hence there is no rest for them, Rev. xiv. 11.

(3.) Their affections will all be tormenting, Matth. xxii. 13, "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." All pleasant passions, whether of one kind or another, will then be rooted out: no joy nor delight in any object whatsoever will spring up with them any more. But they will be brim-full of sorrow, racked with anxiety, filled with horror, galled with fretfulness, and darted through with despair, Rev. xvi. 21. Their souls stocked with strong lusts, and sinful habits contracted in their life, will be left to pine on in them for ever; eagerly desiring to have them gratified, but no gratification of them possible. So they will be under an eternal gnawing hunger after something to satisfy the large cravings of their sinful wretched souls; but there will be nothing to be had for ever for that end, Luke xvi. 25.

(4.) Their consciences will ever be awake there, and witness to their faces that they are justly ruined, and have ruined themselves, Matth. xxii. 12. It will present to them their sins through the whole course of their life, and cut them with remorse for them. It will upbraid them with their unbelief, witness against them that they were warned, but would not hearken. And so it will be in them a gnawing worm that dieth not.

(5.) Their memories will be fresh there, Luke xvi. 25. Sins sometimes buried and out of mind with them, will be called to mind with all their aggravating circumstances. They will have a galling and cutting remembrance of the pleasures of sin, which they sometime thought themselves happy in; of the profits of sin that they sometimes hugged themselves in. Times, places, means, instruments, when, where, and by which they were ruined, or might have been brought into a state of salvation, will all be remembered there.

Lastly, The wrath of God will sink into their souls there, Psal. cix. 18. Vindictive justice will make inconceivable impressions on them, that will melt their souls like wax in the midst of their bowels. Some of God's own people have felt some drops of wrath here, that if they had continued but a little longer, they would have fainted away under them. What will the full shower of it be in hell, where every stone of that hail is the weight of a talent? Rev. xvi. 21.

3. They will be shut up in outer darkness there, Matth. xxii. 13. Hell is the place of outer darkness. It is so called in opposition to the glorious light that the saints within heaven do enjoy. The Jews had their marriage-suppers by night, and so while the guest-chamber was filled with lights, there was nothing but darkness without. So while the saints are in heaven, in eternal light at the marriage supper of the Lamb, the damned are without in darkness. It must be so; for light is sweet to the eyes, and nothing sweet can be there. When Christ suffered on the cross, there was an eclipse for the same reason. But it went off, for Christ overcame death; but the eclipse in hell can never go off. And the darkness there is a deep darkness, it is the mist of darkness that never clears, 2 Pet. ii. 17. the blackness of darkness, Jude, 13. Hence,

(1.) Dismal and melancholy must the state of the damned be, in that region of horror, where is not the least comfortable gleam of light to their eyes. As there is no night in heaven, but eternal day, so there is no day in hell, but an eternal night, an everlasting gloom. If there were no more in it, it would be terrible never to see the light.

(2.) They will not range up and down as vain men now do in the world, diverting themselves with this and the other object. There is nothing to be seen there to please the eye. The Egyptian darkness was an emblem of it, which gives the reason of the phrase, chains of darkness, as was before observed. And accordingly the damned are said to be bound hand and foot, Matth. xxii. 13. in which posture one cannot range from place so place, but at most toss and roll himself like a sick man on his bed.

4. They will have the society of devils there, being shut up with them in the same pit of destruction, Matth. xxv. 41. Rev. xx. 10. As the saints in heaven shall be happy in the society of God himself, Christ, and his holy angels; so will the damned be miserable in the society of the devil and his angels. How dreadful would it be to dwell in the pleasantest spot of the earth haunted by the apparitions of devils? how much more than all that to be shut up in the pit of hell, in the Lake of fire with them, when they shall be filled with wrath to the brim!

5. There will be degrees of torment and misery in hell, the torments of some more grievous than others. All there will be unspeakably miserable, and unpitied in their misery; but the misery of some will be screwed up to a greater height than that of others. As sinners classed themselves on earth, in higher or lower forms, in dishonouring God; so will they be classed in their punishment, Matth. xiii. 30. "Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them

in bundles to burn them." As there are many mansions in heaven, so will there be many bundles in hell; bundles of ignorants, worldlings, swearers, unclean, persecutors, mockers, hypocrites, &c. And the more means of reformation any had, and the greater height of impiety they went to under these means, the more miserable will their case be there, Luke xii. 47, 48. Matth. xxiv. ult.

6. Their misery will be eternal there, and they will know that it will be so, Matth. xxv. 41. "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire." Prov. xiv. 32. "The wicked is driven away in his wickedness." It will be everlasting, without intermission, Rev. xiv. 11. "The smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever; and they have no rest day nor night." No breathing time will be allowed there, but the floods of wrath will be incessantly flowing in upon them. There will be no clearing of the storm that blows there, for ever so short a while. It will be eternal, without ending, Rev. xx. 10. "They shall be tormented day and night, for ever and ever." There is no end to be for ever expected of the easeless torments there. And the damned knowing this, will be cut for ever with despair, and rage, like wild bulls in a net."

Lastly, And thus God will be glorified passively, in those who now will not actively glorify him, Prov. xvi. 4. "The Lord hath made all things for himself; yea, even the wicked for the day of evil." God made man for his glory, capable of enjoying him for ever; he cannot fall short of his end, and therefore he will be glorified upon those who now refuse to answer the end of their creation.

Inf. 1. Sin is a most dreadful evil. Here is a looking-glass wherein you may see it so. How great must the filthiness of it be, that provokes a gracious holy God, to bury the sinner in such a horrible pit out of his sight! How deep must the guilt be, that cannot be washed out with such fearful punishment, so as to have an end!

2. God is a God of terrible justice, a severe avenger of sin. O correct your mistakes of God by this, Psal. l. 21. He gave a demonstration of his justice, in the burning of Sodom; here he gives an eternal demonstration of it.

Lastly, There is nothing that possibly can make the life of an impenitent sinner in this world desirable which has such a miserable end.

The Doctrine of the other World applied.

And now, after having viewed this present world, we have given you some description of the other world, to let you into a necessary view of it; it remains to shut up that weighty subject with some application of the whole.

FIRST, Believe the report from the word concerning the other world firmly; and let it have deep impression on your souls. Consider of it timely with all earnestness, stretch your views beyond this present world, look into the world to come, with the prospect of the word which has been cleared in some measure unto you. There are two things very prevalent in this world, in reference to the other world.

First, Thoughtlessness about it. Men spend their days as in a dream, going through this world with the other world seldom coming into their view, never entering into any suitable thoughtfulness about it. The reasons hereof are,

1. The reigning vanity of the minds of men, Eph. iv. 17, 18. The light and frothy mind cannot find entertainment in any thing that is not like itself, light and vain. Therefore thoughts of the other world are shunned, as a bird delighting to skip from bush to bush, would shun the tying of a stone to its foot. But alas! what avails that, since going into that world cannot be shunned that way?

2. Throng of the cares of this life, Matth. xiii. 23. Men's hearts are so stuffed and perplexed with these, that the concerns of another world cannot get entrance into their hearts; cumbered about many things, the one thing needful is forgot. Hence death surprises many in such a throng, and hurries them away into another, when they were not at all thinking on it, Psal. cxlvi. 4. Luke xii. 20.

3. An averseness of heart to the other world. The hearts of most men are so wedded to this world, that for as great a hell as it is, they would desire no better heaven than what they could make here. They are in no case content to leave it, and go into another world. And their aversion to it makes them thoughtless about it, that they really shun the thoughts of it as much as they can, since they can have no pleasure in them.

4. A fond conceit of coming in time enough to think of the concerns of the other world, when they come near the borders of it; though alas! they know not how near they are to it, and their foot may slip, and they pass into it ere ever they are aware.

Lastly, Satan has a great hand in it, who endeavours to hoodwink sinners, and to be continually buzzing into their ears other things, that may keep them from serious thoughts about it; and all to compass their ruin.

Secondly, Unbelief of it. Men are not only thoughtless about it, not turning their thoughts that way; but when the report of it is brought to them, they do not believe it. There is a root of Atheism and infidelity in the minds of men, as to things not seen, so that they hear these things as idle tales. The evidences of this are,

1. The little impression these things make on the minds of men, when they hear them. How many do hear the report of the other world with as little concern as they could hear an idle story, which they had no manner of concern about? The account of the joys of heaven does not move them, and that of the terrors of hell makes no suitable impression.

The supine negligence and carelessness about our part in the other world. If in the time of hearing men are somewhat moved, yet they are like the sieve taken out of the water when they go away, they lose all. They are not effectually stirred up to take some course whereby they may flee from the wrath to come, and may become heirs of heaven. If it were but a cot house they had, in case they were to remove out of it, they would be careful to secure another for themselves. But they know they must die, yet they are quite careless as to where they are to lodge next.

Lastly, The unaccountable misspending of time, either trifling or doing evil; doing nothing or what is worse than nothing. Did men believe, that now they are sowing for eternity, that what they now do in this world, they are to eat the fruit of in the other world; would they be so barren in good works, and so lavish in sinful courses and actions?

Wherefore I beseech you consider seriously of the world to come, and believe the report about it.

I. About the being of it. O to believe firmly, that there is another world, a heaven and a hell; a receptacle of joy for the departed souls of the godly, whereinto their bodies also are to be received after the resurrection; and a receptacle of horror for the souls and bodies of the wicked.

2. About the state of men in it, as held forth in the word; how that there they arrive either at the highest pinnacle of happiness or misery; and to continue unchangeable for ever and ever. To inforce the exhortation I offer the following motives.

1. Consider ye have by the providence of God heard much of it from the word of God. The Lord of the other world has appointed his messengers to speak of it to us in this world, that we may make ready for it in time. When the Lord has been sounding the alarm, let us not be deaf to his call, but know and believe that we are to march into the other world. It will be an aggravated guilt to be thoughtless about it, after hearing so much of it, or to entertain the report as idle tales.

2. The world we have been hearing of, we will all see at length; and see it not afar off, but being in it. We might be the less concerned about it, if we were never to go there; but thither we must

all go. And it may well apologize for our insisting so much on it, that we are to be inhabitants there, eternal inhabitants there. It must be infatuation to be thoughtless or unbelieving about it.

3. It will not be long ere we will be there. We have but a hand-breadth of days to pass, and then we are there; our age, which is as nothing before the Lord, being once run through, we pass into that other world. Our life here is but a short preface to a long eternity; a skip from the womb to the grave, and we have made considerable progress in it already. And we are not far from the entrance of the passage into the other world, and in a little we will be in one of the parts of it, join the inhabitants thereof, and be settled in the state of it.

4. We know not how soon we may be there. The journey to the other world is not alike long to all. It is but a short journey the longest of it; but God brings some there by a short cut, and they are at the end when they think there is a great part of the way before them.

Lastly, A happy part there will never be reached without serious thoughts about it, and a firm faith in it.

SECONDLY, Improve the believed report of the other world suitably. If there is really another world, a world to come, and such as from the Lord's word it has been reported of to you; without controversy it is a matter of the greatest concern to us, and ought to influence our whole life. And it is not a true faith of it, that does not influence our conduct accordingly. Now if we would improve it suitably,

First, Improve it to a speedy choice of the way to the happy part of it, and entering upon it without delay. We are all going to the other world; but as there are two very distant parts of it, so there are two as really different ways therein, viz. the broad way, and the narrow way, Matth. vii. 13, 14. If you take the broad way, it will have a miserable ending; if the narrow, a happy ending. Therefore choose well speedily, and enter on the happy way without delay. And,

1. Choose and enter speedily into the personal way, the Lord Jesus Christ, John xiv. 6. Unite with him by faith, Eph. iii. 17. He is Lord of the other world, and heir of all things; match with him, and heaven shall be your dowery. The keys of hell and death hang at his girdle; but them that come unto him he will in no wise cast out. Here is the sure bargain for eternity. Enter personally into the covenant of grace, by believing on Christ.

2. Choose and enter speedily on the real way, the way of holiness, Isa. xxxv. 8. For "without holiness no man shall see the

Lord," Heb. xii. 14. If ye mind the holy city in the other world, ye must be holy in all conversation. If ye hold the way of looseness and licentiousness, profanity, or formality, it will undoubtedly land you in the unclean place in the other world. As ye sow ye will reap.

Secondly, Improve it to a lowering of your esteem of this present world, and weaning your hearts from it, 1 John ii. 15. A right view of the other world would make this with all its gaudy show little in our eyes.

1. Seek not your portion in it. Leave that to those who have no expectation of the treasure in heaven; make the best of it they can, they will make a sorry portion of it, Psal. xvii. 14, 15. Take ye that advice, if ye be wise, Matth. vi. 33, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." Let the riches, honours, and pleasures of the other world be the great conquest you are set for; and the things of a present life only a by-hand work.

2. Set not your hearts upon it, but use it passingly, 1 Cor. vii. 29—31. Carry yourselves not as natives, but as pilgrims and strangers in it. What a folly would it be for the traveller to let his heart go out on the conveniences of the inn, which he is quickly to leave; on the pleasant places by the way, where he is but passing?

3. Do not value yourselves upon your possessions in it, and your expectations from it. The former are very precarious, which he may soon be deprived of; the latter very uncertain, wherein ye are fair to be disappointed. The world's mountains in expectation, often dwindle into molehills of enjoyment. But value yourselves, according to the possessions and expectations from the other world.

Thirdly, Improve it to a Christian bearing of your afflictions with patience, Luke xxi. 19. Jam. v. 7. If we observe well, we will see that many times it is a falling into afflicting circumstances in this world, that makes us look first after the other world; and the same is what makes people look to it again, after prosperity has made them forget it. And having believingly looked into the other world, when we look back again to our afflictions, we will be the more able to bear them patiently. For,

1. We will thereby find them to be comparatively light burdens. That which makes our afflictions so very heavy, and us so uneasy under them, is the weighing them in the balance with other things of this world; our sorrow and other's joy, our poverty and other's wealth, our wants and other's enjoyments; that is the devil's rack, which he aims to put the afflicted on, that they may be made to

murmur, spurn, rage, and quarrel. But lay them in the balance with the other world's joys and sorrows, they will be light as a feather, 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18.

2. We will find them thereby to be short also, ib. The afflicted are ready to cry out, their trouble never ends, they can see no outgate. Why, but because they look not to the other world, a view of which would soon make them see they are mistaken. Job iii. 17, "There the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest." What are our afflictions here of the longest continuance, but like the inconveniencies a traveller meets with on the road? If he is going to his father's house, he easily digests it, knowing that he will be easy there; if they be carrying him away to prison, he easily digests it, seeing that it will be worse with him. In both cases he bears it, knowing he is not to stay with them.

3. We will thereby see ourselves the more nearly allied to the saints in glory in the other world, by companionship in tribulation. Where are they in the other world, that had their good things in this world, and where are they that had their evil things? Luke xvi. 25. If ye look through the upper part of that world, there ye will see the man of sorrows, the man of God's right hand there, and all his happy attendants persons that came out of great tribulations, Rev. vii. 14; the sore tried Abraham, the burdened man Moses, the afflicted David, the persecuted Paul, the mournful Heman, &c. If ye look to the lower part of it, there ye will see those that spent their days in wealth, and in a moment went down to the grave, Job xxi. 13. in a merry jovial life; the dancing Herodias, the rich glutton that fared deliciously every day, &c. A serious look of this sort to the other world, would make us embrace our cross, and say, Lord, let me not taste of the dainties of the wicked, nor get my heaven here.

Lastly, We will thereby see ourselves a fitting and squaring for heaven. Stones to be laid in the temple above must be cut and hewed before they come there. Afflictions are God's hewing tools, whereby he smooths people for that building; and rough and hard stones we are, that take much hewing. Instruments of our afflictions are but the hands he employs for smoothing the stones for his building.

Lastly, Improve it to suitable endeavours to prepare for that other world. If ye prepare not for it, ye do not believe the report of it. And,

1. Labour to be habitually prepared for it. Get out of your natural state, into the state of grace; live no longer without the bond of the covenant, but personally enter into it, by believing on Christ.

Ye must be converted, ye must be born again, and become new creatures.

2. Labour to reach actual preparation for the other world, being always ready to go into it at the call. Let your thoughts dwell much upon it; carry yourselves as strangers in this world, let there be no standing controversy betwixt God and you; and timely dispatch your generation work, and watch and wait till your change come. Consider what you have heard of the other world, and lay it to heart.

THE GREAT CARE AND CONCERN NOW, THAT OUR SOULS BE NOT GATHERED WITH SINNERS IN THE OTHER WORLD, CONSIDERED AND IMPROVED.

The substance of some Sermons preached at Ettrick, in the year 1729.

Psalm xxvi. 19.

Gather not my soul with sinners.

Whoever believes and considers the doctrine of the other world, must needs improve it to a horror of the state of the ungodly there, on the one hand, and a desire of the state of the godly on the other. He cannot miss to join the Psalmist in this text, saying, *Gather not my soul with sinners.* In which words we have to observe,

1. Something taken for granted, or supposed, namely, that the souls of men are to be gathered, each to those of their own sort, which is at death, Gen. xxv. 8. Now there is a promiscuous multitude in this world, good and bad together, like corn and chaff in a barn-floor, or fishes in a net; but they are gathered in the other world, some into the happy, others into the miserable company, every one to those of their own sort.

2. Something expressed, namely, a horror of the congregation of sinners in the other world. "Lord, (says he,) gather not my soul among their souls; when I remove hence, let me not take up my lodging among them; let me not drop into their company, state and condition in the other world."

3. The connection. This request comes in natively on a reflection the Psalmist makes on the disposition of his soul, and his way, in this world. His conscience witnesseth his dislike of associating with

the ungodly, ver. 4, 5, "I have not sat with vain persons, neither will I go in with dissemblers; I have hated the congregation of evil doers, and will not sit with the wicked;" his love and liking to the presence of God and the congregation of the saints, ver. 8, "Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth." So he prays with hope, *Gather not my soul with sinners:* q. d. Lord, I have no liking of the company of ungodly sinners here; it is a burden to me in this world; let me not be shut up with them in the other world. My soul loves thy house; let me not be with sinners excluded eternally from thy presence.

The text plainly affords the following doctrine, *viz.*

Doct. Now is the time that people should be in care and concern, that their souls be not gathered with sinners in the other world.

In discoursing from this doctrine, we shall,

I. Consider some things implied in it.

II. Shew who are the sinners, that we are to have a horror of our souls being gathered with in the other world.

III. What it is for one's soul to be gathered with sinners in the other world.

IV. Consider his care and concern; or shew, what is implied in this earnest request, "Gather not my soul with sinners."

V. Give the reasons, why we should be in such care and concern.

VI. Make application.

I. We shall consider some things implied in the doctrine. It implies,

1. The souls of men in their bodies in this world, are in a scattered and disorderly condition, saints and sinners in one place, one outward condition, all mixed through other; the tares and the wheat are in one field; corn and chaff in one floor; fish good and bad in one net; sheep and goats in one flock; Ham in the ark, Judas in Christ's family, and profane hypocrites with sincere Christians, in one visible church. This mixture has a threefold effect.

(1.) It keeps both parties uneasy, Gen. iii. 15. The saints are uneasy with the conversation of sinners, 2 Pet. ii. 7. and sinners with that of saints, who are an eye-sore to them, Gen. xix. 9. The one wearies to have the other out of their world, the other many a time to be away from among them. Their principles, aims, and manner of life are opposite; and they cannot unite more than the iron and clay.

(2.) They are an embargo upon one another, so that this world is neither so good nor yet so bad, as otherwise it would be. It is with the world in this case, as with the believer in whom there is a mix-

ture of flesh and spirit, Gal. v. 17. The conversation of sinners often infects saints, leads them into snares and temptations; handling of pitch they are defiled, and are often made to come mourning out of her company, as Peter in the high priest's hall. Sometimes again saints win on sinners, to turn them from the evil of their ways, 1 Cor. vii. 12, 13, 16. 1 Pet. iii. 1. And even where that is not gained, yet it does something to keep the world in external order, beyond what it would be if all were alike, no mixture of saints in the society, Matth. v. 13. like salt that keeps it from rotting and stinking, as otherwise it would do.

(3.) There is a mixed dispensation of providence in the world; sometimes fair weather, sometimes foul; sometimes public mercies dispensed, sometimes public calamities; for God has his friends and his enemies both in one company; and the society meets with tokens of God's good-will for the sake of the one, and tokens of anger for the sake of the other.

2. The souls of men in the other world will be orderly ranged into different congregations, according to their different natures and dispositions, saints and sinners, who will make two unmixed societies. This implies two things.

(1.) A separation of the disagreeing parties now mixed, Matth. iii. 12. The good and bad mixed in this world will be separated there; they will not make but one society more, as they did here; and the separation will be a thorough one, not one goat left among the sheep, nor one sheep among the goats, Psal. i. 5. Matth. xiii. 41. For all the mixture that is here, there will be a cleanly separation there, whatever were the ties of political, ecclesiastical, or domestical relations among them. Matth. xxiv. 40, 41, "Then shall two be in the field, the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill, the one shall be taken, and the other left."

(2.) A gathering of their separate parties into their respective societies they belonged to, whereby they will be ranged according to their kind and sort; saints with saints, and sinners with sinners. For there will be two, and but two congregations in the other world, Christ's and the devil's, Psal. i. 5; the bundle of life, 1 Sam. xxv. 29, and the bundle of death, Matth. xiii. 33. Many are misplaced here, and get wrong names; some of the devil's goats appear in sheep's clothing, and are mistaken for such as belong to Christ; some of Christ's sheep are busked up by the malicious world in wolves' skins, as if they belonged to the devil. But nothing of that will be there.

3. Death is the gathering time, which the Psalmist has in view in the

text. Ye have a time here that ye call the gathering time, about the term, when the servants are going away, wherein ye gather your strayed sheep that every one may get their own again. Death is God's gathering time wherein he gets the souls belonging to him, and the devil those belonging to him. They did go long together, but then they are parted; and saints are taken home to the congregation of saints, and sinners to the congregation of sinners. And it concerns us to say, "Gather not my soul with sinners." Whoever be our people here, God's people, or the devil's, death will gather our souls to them.

Lastly, It is a horrible thing to be gathered with sinners in the other world. To think of our souls being gathered with them there, may make the hair of one's head stand up. Many now like no gathering like the gathering with sinners; it is the very delight of their hearts, it makes a brave jovial life in their eyes. And it is a pain to them, to be gathered with saints, to be detained before the Lord on a sabbath day. But to be gathered with them in the other world, is a horror to all sorts.

(1.) The saints have a horror of it, as in the text. To think to be staked down in their company in the other world, would be a hell of itself to the godly. David never had such a horror of the society of the poor, the diseased, the persecuted, &c. as of sinners. He is content to be gathered with saints of whatever condition; but, Lord, says he, "Gather not my soul with sinners."

(2.) The wicked themselves have a horror of it, Numb. xxi. 10. "Let me die the death of the righteous," said the wicked Balaam, "and let my last end be like his." Though they would be content to live with them, or be with them in life, their consciences bear witness that they have a horror of being with them in death. They would live with sinners, but they would die with saints. A poor unreasonable self-condemning thought. I believe, that if drunkards, unclean persons, mockers of religion, embracing and rejoicing in one another, should as Belshazzar see the form of a hand writing on the wall, that it is the purpose of God, their souls should be gathered with one another in the other world, they would be struck and ready to faint away with horror, thinking, "Ah! shall my soul be gathered with drunkards, harlots, mockers?" &c.

Wherefore since all have a horror of their souls being gathered with sinners in the other world, have a horror of being gathered with them now in their way. For it is an absurd thing to think, that you shall live with sinners, and yet die with saints. Balaam wished to reconcile these contradictions, but found it would not do, Numb. xxxi. 8.

II. I come to shew who are the sinners, that we are to have a horror of our souls to be gathered with in the other world. All men in this world are sinners absolutely considered, and so was David himself; Eccl. vii. 22. "For there is not a just man upon earth, that doth good, and sinneth not." But some are sinners comparatively, in comparison with others that are righteous; they are grievous sinners, as the word properly signifies; hence they are classed with publicans, a most odious sort of people among the Jews, Matth. ix. 10.

Now sinners, grievous sinners, in the scripture use of the word, are all unrighteous persons, as appears from the opposition of these terms, Psal. i. 5. "Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous." Prov. xiii. 21. "Evil pursueth sinners; but to the righteous good shall be repaid." Matth. ix. 13. He that is not righteous, is in the scripture-sense a sinner, a grievous sinner. Hence,

1. All unjustified persons are sinners; for they are unrighteous before God, as being without an imputed righteousness on them, Rom. v. 29. And since all unbelievers are unjustified, whatever is their manner of life, they are such sinners; they walk naked before God, and their shame is not covered.

2. All unconverted, unsanctified, unregenerate persons are sinners; for they are unrighteous as being without an implanted righteousness, Psal. li. 13. Rom. v. 8. They are not brought back to God, but are in a course of straying from him; their unholy set of spirit remains, their nature is not changed.

Thus all natural men are sinners, whose state in the other world is horrible, whatever their appearance and way may be here. There are four sorts of them.

1. The grossly ignorant, who neither know nor care for knowing the foundation points of religion. These cannot be but sinners; for however harmless they may be among men, they are grievous sinners before God as being in darkness, 1 John ii. 11. Matth. vi. 23. And miserable will they be whose souls are gathered with them in the other world, Isa. xxvii. 11. "It is a people of no understanding: therefore he that made them will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them will shew them no favour."

2. The profane, who give the loose to their lusts, in the pollutions of the outward man. Such as profane swearers, who set their mouths against the heavens, whom God will not hold guiltless; unclean persons, whom God will judge; scoffers of piety, maligners, and mockers of seriousness, whose hands shall be made strong; in a word, all those who are loose and licentious in their lives. These

are sinners with a witness; and wo to them whose souls shall be gathered with them in the other world, Gal. v. 19—21. "They which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." Luke xix. 27. "Those mine enemies which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them before me."

3. Mere moralists, who satisfy themselves with moral virtue, in obedience to the letter of the second table of the moral law, but neglect the duties of religion towards God. They are just and honest in their dealings with men, but neglect their duty to God. These also are sinners, and miserable will be the case of those whose souls are gathered with them in the other world, Matth. v. 20. "For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter the kingdom of heaven." They seek not God's face, and they will be hid from it.

4. Formalists, who have a form of godliness in a profession of religion, and performance of acts of devotion; but are strangers to real religion, 2 Tim. iii. 5. Some of them are gross hypocrites, who stain their profession of religion with their untender walk in matters of the second table, Matth. xxiii. 23. Others are close hypocrites, whose outward conversation is blameless, but they are strangers to heartwork, the secret part of the Christian life, and entertain always some beloved lust or other. These also are sinners, Mark x. 21; and wo will be to those whose souls are gathered with them in the other world, Psal. cxxv. ult. "As for such as turn aside unto their crooked ways, the Lord shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity." Matth. xxiv. ult. "And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Now all these are sinners, grievous sinners, who, if they continue so, will undoubtedly perish. They are justly called and reputed sinners, in opposition to saints. For,

(1.) They all miss the mark totally that men should aim at. The word by which the Holy Ghost expresseth sin, is properly to miss the mark, Judg. xx. 16. The mark that all men are obliged to aim at and hit, is the glory of God, the chief end of man, 1 Cor. x. 31. The saints brought to the enjoyment of God in Christ, do all hit it, though not perfectly, Phil. i. 21. Rom. xiv. 7, 8. They live to the glory of God their Creator and Redeemer. But all natural men miss it totally, Rom. iii. 23. They are conjured within the circle of self; they live to themselves, not to God; their lusts, morality, and religion meet all in the dead sea of self. They are a company of self-lovers, self-seekers, self-pleasers, Phil. ii. 21. So they and their

way, not being directed to God, shall perish from his presence, Psal. i. ult; and their straying will end in their falling into the pit.

(2.) They are all guilty of death before the Lord, 1 Kings i. 21; with Rom. iii. 19. The sentence of death is in force against them, and they are sons of death. The curse of the broken law lies on them, binding them over to avenging wrath. But the saints are not so; though they are not without sin, yet they are without guilt of eternal wrath. Rom. viii. 1. They are absolved in their justification; but natural men, whatever be the difference of their crimes, are all sinners, law condemned criminals.

(3.) They can do nothing but sin, Psal. xiv. 3. It is true, the saints sin in every thing they do; but yet they do things truly good, and accepted of God, Isa. lvi. 7; the imperfections attending their duties do not quite mar them, 2 Cor. viii. 12. But natural men's actions are all sins, their natural, civil, and religious actions, only evil. Their whole life is woven into one web of sin from the beginning to the end, without one thread of purity in it: so they are sinners in a most proper sense.

Quest. How can that be, since they do things that are unquestionably good? *Ans.* It cannot be otherwise. For,

[1.] The principle of action in them is quite wrong. They themselves are wholly corrupt and loathsome, and so is all they do. Put the best of liquor in a vessel used to filthy uses, and one cannot look on it, Tit. i. 15. "Unto them that are defiled and unbelieving, is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled." Their filthy state defiles their duties, but their duties cannot purify them, Hag. ii.

[2.] The end of their actions is quite wrong. They are like a servant very busy, but in the mean time he is working to himself, not to his master, Zech. vii. 5. "When ye fasted and mourned—did ye at all fast unto me, even unto me?"

(4.) They all sin with true whole heart and good-will, to it. The saints do not so, 1 John iii. 9. They have a contrary principle in them that contradicts the inclination to sin, so that at most it is but with a half-will, Gal. v. 17. But natural men are all flesh, wholly corrupt, therefore the heart goes with a bent-sail to sin. It is true, there may be something opposing sin in the unregenerate; but then that struggle of theirs is but betwixt the flesh in one part lusting, and in another fearing.

(5.) All their sins that ever came on them through the whole course of their lives, are still abiding on them, in the guilt, filth, and dominion of them. It is not so with the saints; guilt contradicted is done away, the filth is in part removed, the reigning power

of sin is broken. Sin in them is like mud in a spring, but in natural men like mud in a pool. Sin is ever coming on, never going off; but all sticks, original and actual; for there is no remission of sin to them, and no sanctification by the Spirit. Unbelief is a need-nail to all their sins, John viii. 24.

Lastly, They continue sinners in the other world, Prov. xiv. 32. "The wicked is driven away in his wickedness." In the moment of death the saints are perfected, they are no more sinners; but natural men have sin left on them, when they die; then the sentence takes place, Rev. xxii. 11. "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still, and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still," and they are cast out as unclean into the unclean place.

III. I proceed to shew what it is for one's soul to be gathered with sinners in the other world. It implies,

1. All men's souls are to be gathered out of their bodies by death, Job xxxiv. 14, 15. "If he set his heart upon man, if he gather unto himself his spirit and his breath; all flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust." Man consists of a soul and a body; the body was originally dust lying here and there scattered on the earth; and at death it must be reduced to the same condition again; the soul came immediately from God, and at death must return to him, Eccl. xii. 7. And no man can have power to retain it in the body, but it must be separated from it, and so the man dies.

2. There are very different receptacles of separate souls; there is a blessed receptacle of the souls of saints, wherein they shall all be together in the other world; and a miserable receptacle for the souls of sinners, where they also shall be together in that world. Though the receptacle of the bodies of saints and sinners is common to both in this world, both lying in the same church-yard, yet that of their souls is not so.

3. A separation of the soul from the society of saints, Matth. xiii. 41. At death, sinners that were mixed with the saints in this world are gathered out from among them, like weeds from among the corn, and tares from among the wheat. And we should be concerned now, that that be not our lot. For it will be a most terrible excommunication, Psal. i. 5. "The ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous."

Lastly, A placing of the soul in the society of sinners in the other world, putting them in the same place with them, and in the same state. This is to be deprecated, "Gather not my soul with sinners." To be gathered to sinners as our people, shut up with them in the same receptacle of spirits, to have our lot with them in the other world, and fare as they fare for eternity, is what we should be in the greatest care and concern, that it be not our lot.

IV. I shall consider this care and concern; or shew what is implied in this earnest request, "Gather not my soul with sinners." It implies,

1. A sure and certain expectation, that our souls must be gathered into the other world by death. The Psalmist prays not against the gathering simply, for in that case neither prayers nor tears can prevail, force nor fraud, Psal. lxxxix. 48. "What man is he that liveth and shall not see death?" But since they must be gathered, they pray that they be not gathered with sinners. There is no may-be here, but it must be, as it is "appointed unto men once to die," Heb. ix. 27. We must lay our account with it, as an event inevitable.

2. A belief of the miserable state of sinners in the other world, and the happiness of saints. If one is not persuaded of these, he will be in no concern about the matter. But we must look beyond this world into the other, and in the glass of the word take a view of the state of sinners and saints there, to raise us to due concern in it. Often do men look into the state of sinners here, and behold the easy life they have of it, and they wish in effect to be among them; but if we look to them in the other world, we will wish to be far from them, to have nothing ado with them.

3. A horror of the state of sinners there. The man looking to it shrinks back, saying, Save me from it! Their state there duly apprehended, is apt to breed such a horror, as not only cures the envy at their present prosperous state, but makes the man that he would not for a thousand worlds, his soul were in their souls' stead, Psal. lxxiii. 18—20.

4. An earnest concern to be delivered from it. The man takes a view of it seriously, and he is not indifferent in the matter. He is not negligent as to the future state of his soul in the other world: but timely lays down measures for eternity, knowing that to miscarry in that point is a loss that can never be made up.

5. An acknowledgment that God may in justice gather one's soul with sinners. The best have as much sin as deserves it, and all are by nature liable to it, Rom. iii. 19. And every one that sees the ill of sin, and its just demerit, will see that if justice take place against them, they will be gathered with sinners in the other world.

Lastly, A betaking one's self to the mercy of the Judge, in his own way, for the pardon of sin, and the removal of the just punishment, Job ix. 15. And that is to confess sin, flee to lay hold on the altar Jesus Christ by faith, separating from the society and way of sinners in time.

V. I come now to give reasons, why we should be in such care

and concern, that our souls be not gathered with sinners in the other world.

1. Because to be gathered with them is to be separated for ever from God, and the holy and happy society whereof Christ is the head, Matth. vii. 23, "Depart from me, ye that work iniquity." The whole herd of sinners in the other world will be in a state of excommunication, banished from the comfortable presence of God, the place of his glory, Psal. v. 4, 5, kept out of the society of Christ, the holy angels, and saints, Matth. xiii. 41. And to be gathered with them must needs then be horrible.

2. They will be gathered into a most doleful place, Isa. xxiv. 22, "They shall be gathered together as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison." At death sinners are gathered into the prison of hell, shut up there to the judgment of the great day; and from the tribunal they will be driven away thither again all together, there to be shut up for ever, Matth. xxv. 41. The horror of the place they are gathered into, the eternal gloom there, the chains of darkness that will hold them there, the mist of darkness that never clears there, may all move to say, "Gather not my soul with sinners."

3. Because they will be gathered unto the most frightful society there, with the devil and his angels, Matth. xxv. 41. They will be cast into the lake of fire with the devil that deceived them; and that will be more terrible than to be gathered with dragons, serpents, and vipers here, which would quickly make an end of one. O that men would consider how the service of the devil in sin here, will bring them into the society of him and his angels hereafter, that they might have a horror of being joined with sinners!

4. Because sinners will be in a state of punishment there, heavy beyond expression; being "punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power," 2 Thess. i. 9. Now is the time wherein sinners take leave to commit their crimes, trampling on God's laws, despising his Son, and grieving his Spirit; then will be the time that they must suffer and pay for all to the satisfaction of injured justice. And the view of that terrible reckoning may cause one say, "Gather not my soul with sinners."

5. Because they will be left in their sin there, Prov. xiv. 32. "The wicked is driven away in his wickedness." John viii. 24, "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." At the moment of death, it is said to the sinner, "He that is filthy, let him be filthy still;" and he is cast away as an unclean person into the unclean place, with all the guilt, filth, and power of his sins upon

him, never to be removed. And here consider, (1.) The perverse frame of spirit, which is natural to man, being enmity against God, will remain with them there; for there is no sanctification of the Spirit begun on the other side of death. And it will be undisguised there, the peace being blocked up, and the war for ever betwixt God and them proclaimed. It will be irritated by their hopeless miserable state, Rev. xvi. ult.

(2.) Their sin will be their punishment there; a just revenge of cleaving to it over the belly of all reproofs, warnings, and entreaties? So they will be filled with their own ways. And,

[1.] They will be cut with tormenting passions, envy at the happiness of the saints, fretting under their own misery, and despairing for ever of relief, Matth. xxii. 13, "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

[2.] As for their pleasurable sins that their hearts were set on here, the desire of them will continue, but the satisfying of them in any measure will be impossible. So they will be for ever racked between the desire and the denial of satisfaction to their lusts. Who then would not say, "Gather not my soul with sinners?"

Lastly, Because being once gathered with them, they will never more be separated from among them. As the tree falls it must lie. They that are gathered with sinners at death, must be gathered with them at the resurrection, and shut up with them in the pit of destruction for ever.

I shall now make some application of this subject.

USE I. Of information. We may learn from it,

1. That the state and condition of sinners, whatever advantages of ease, wealth, &c. it be attended with, is a miserable one, to be pitied, lamented and avoided, not to be envied or desired. For it is impossible that all the wealth of this world should counterbalance the wo in the other world that is abiding them. Who would desire his lot with a condemned malefactor, though he fared deliciously every day; or quietly enjoy the best covered table, while a sword was hanging by a hair over his head?

2. That the great business of our life is to learn to die, and the great business which we have to do in this world is to prepare for the other, Job xiv. 14 "If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait till my change come." Here we do but sojourn, there we are to abide: here we are on our journey, there we come to our dwelling-place: and it is of the utmost consequence which part of that world we arrive in, Matth. xvi. 26. And they who do not see to that in the first and chief place, are fools with a witness.

3. That we are in hazard of miscarrying with reference to our abode in the other world; and carelessness about it will have a fatal issue. If all were to be gathered there into the happy receptacle without destinction, we might be easy; but it is not so; there will be a gathering into the region of horror, as well as into the region of bliss. And we will be sure to miscarry, if we do not in time secure our happy reception, in the way appointed.

Lastly, That the hazard of miscarrying in it should quicken us to suitable endeavours for securing our happiness in the other world. Our eternal state is our greatest concern, and every thing being to be plied according to its weight, it should be seen to with the greatest care, and nothing laid in the balance with it, neither cares, profits, nor pleasures.

USE II. Of reproof to several sorts of sinners. It reproves,

1. The *careless* sinner, who is careless about the other world, and his future state. How many are there, who never once seriously consider, where they are like to take up their abode in the other world? But they live as if there were no other life but this. O what do you think, that you will get away in a dream to the region of bliss, that you will stumble into heaven which you are not looking out for? No; you may drop into the pit that way, but not get up into the holy hill, Isa. xxxii. 9, 10. The foolish virgins that were careless about oil to their lamps, got their head and heart full of care out of time, Matth. xxv. and so will ye, if ye continue in that careless temper.

2. The *slothful* sinner, who cannot bestir himself to be at due pains in this matter. Though such are not quite unconcerned about the other world, yet they do nothing to purpose in it. If lazy wishes and faint endeavours would do it, they would be happy; but they cannot stir up themselves to take hold of an offered Christ, covenant, and salvation, Isa. lxiv. 7. to cut off offending right hands, and pluck out offending right eyes; to take the kingdom of heaven by force, and press into it. Alas! this is not a business to be managed on the bed of sloth, Eccl. v. 18. Remember the doom of the slothful servant, who was cast into outer darkness, Matth. xxv. 26, 30.

3. The *delaying* sinner, who puts off the business from time to time, till it be out of time, and he is ruined. The young put it off till they should become aged, the aged to a sick-bed, and the sick often find they have enough ado otherwise. So the proper time of securing happiness in the other world is lost, as in the case of Felix, Acts xxiv. 25. But why will men delay what must needs be done, or else they are ruined, especially when time is uncertain?

Lastly, The *malignant* sinner, who hates the society of saints, and seriousness, a religious life and religious exercises; making the society and way of sinners his choice. O what confidence can ye have to cry to God, not to gather your soul with sinners in the other world, who are those in whom is all your delight in this? How can ye think to be gathered with saints in heaven, to whom with their way and exercises you have so great aversion on earth? Nay, that malignity against God's people shews you to be none of them; and you must be gathered to your people, your own people.

USE III. Of comfort to those who are in due care and concern now, that they be not gathered with sinners in the other world. This is a weighty concern to them that have it, and they will need comfort. And there are four things comfortable in it. It is comfortable,

1. That you are in the way of duty with reference to the other world, Matth. xxiv. 46, "Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when he cometh shall find so doing." While others are going on fearlessly, you are looking about you, concerned how it may be with you in the end. It is a piece of wisdom, and hopeful, thus to be exercised in considering your latter end, Deut. xxxii. 29. God's word speaks comfort to such, Isa. xxxv 3, 4. "Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not; behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense, he will come and save you."

2. That you take your work in time, while yet there is hope; and so your care and concern may come to issue well, Isa. xxxii. 20. "Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters." There is no son nor daughter of Adam but will be in that care and concern one time or other; so that there will not be two of the whole herd of sinners that will desire to be gathered together; but alas! with the most part it will be out of time, Matth. xxv. 11, 12. Now I say it is comfortable in your case, that you timely entertain concern about it, while the judge is on a throne of grace to receive such applications. I may allude to that, 1 Sam. xxv. 8. "Ye come in a good day;" with 2 Cor, vi. 2, "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."

3. This care and concern is wrought in all God's elect, by the Spirit of Christ. The word calls for it, Acts ii. 40. "Save yourselves from this untoward generation." The Spirit works it accordingly, Rom. viii. 26; 2 Cor. vii. 11. He it was that breathed that desire in the Psalmist; and those appetites and desires that are from the Spirit cannot be in vain. So that the care and concern is

common to you with all the children of God, who all join you in that spiritual breathing, "Gather not my soul with sinners."

Lastly, You have to do with a good and gracious God, that has no pleasure to the ruin of sinners, Ezek. xxiii. 11, "Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live." No tender man will give his oath without necessity, or where there is no controversy to be decided by it. So here there is one, namely, the devil allegeth to sinners against God, that there is no pleasing of him, otherwise than in the sinner's ruin, and therefore all care and concern that way is needless. The slothful servant licketh up his vomit, Matth. xxv. 24, 25. "Lord, (said he) I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed; and I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth." And God purgeth himself by an oath of it; believe it then no more. Encourage yourself from the goodness of his nature in Christ, be that your care and concern.

(1.) Have you already got your heart's fill of the state and way of sinners out of Christ, so that you desire no more of it, but would fain be out of the reach thereof? The goodness of God's nature in Christ will not suffer the gathering of such a one with sinners in the other world, Psal. xxvi. 4—9. Will a good God take a sinner already groaning under, burdened and wearied with the state and way of sinners out of Christ in this world, and stake him down with them for ever in the other world? No; be it far from him.

(2.) Have you got a longing after holiness, perfect holiness, and a liking of the purity of the shining ones there, that your soul cries, "Gather not my soul with sinners," but with saints in the other world? Truly that is the work of the Spirit of Christ in you; for "the carnal mind is enmity against God," Rom. viii. 7. Hence is the promise, Heb. viii. 10. "I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts." And it is the society of sinners, not as sinners, but as miserable, the hypocrite is frightened at; and the society of saints in the other world, not as saints or holy, but as happy ones, that they desire it. It is inconsistent with the goodness of God then to create such longing and liking, and yet never satisfy it; so to open the mouth of the soul, and then to put an empty spoon in it.

Object. But a concern not to be gathered with sinners in the other world is a common thing, which Balaam and the foolish virgins had, as well as the godly; what comfort then can be in it, since one may have it, and yet be gathered with them in the end? *Ans.* There is a very great difference betwixt this concern in sincere Christians

and others. There are four things, which, if you find in your concern in this point, you may conclude that you shall not be gathered with sinners in the other world.

1. If their separation from Christ as the chief object of your soul's love, makes you averse to be gathered with them, Psal. xxvi. 8, 9. "Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth: Gather not my soul with sinners." The ungodly, if all were right to that with them in the other world, could digest that; for Christ is not the chief object of their love. But this argues your esteem of Christ above all, 1 Pet. ii. 7. and your desire of communion with him as your chief happiness, Phil. i. 23. You look upon sinners as seated in the other world, and you see Christ is not among them; and since he is not with them, your soul cries, Then, Lord, let not me be with them neither, for the chief object of my love is not among them. If this is the case, truly your soul shall not be gathered with them, John vi. 7. "Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." Psal. lxxiii. 24, 25. "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee.

2. If you have a horror of their being left in sin in the other world, as well as of their being laid under punishment there, Rom. vii. 24, 25. "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death! I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." Nobody believing the unspeakable torment of the damned in the other world, but must have a horror of it, because they love themselves. But laying aside the consideration of that, soberly ask yourselves, what think you of that part of the sentence, "Let him that is filthy, be filthy still," in itself? Abstracting from the torment joined with it, that would be no hard thing to most men, their hearts being wedded to their lusts, and not knowing how to shift without them. If then you find that thought of itself to be killing to you, and sufficient to make a hell; that argues you partakers of the new nature, that hath a horror of sin as its opposite, and desires to be holy and without sin, which is its perfection. And certainly God will not deprive the new nature of its desired perfection, and consequently will not gather a soul thus disposed with sinners in the other world, Psal. cxxxviii. ult. "The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me." Matth. v. 6. "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled."

3. If you are with purpose of heart coming out from among them, out of their society, way, and manner of life in this world. Many would be content to live with them, though not to die with them,

Numb. xxiii. 10. But are ye not content to live with them neither, no more than to die with them? Have ye conceived an aversion to the life as well as the death, not only of the grossly wicked, but of all that are out of Christ, strangers to the power of godliness, being drawn to the love and choice of the fellowship of the saints by the lustre of the divine image on them? Fear not, God will never gather you with them in the other world, Psal. xxvi. 4, 5, 9; 1 John iii. 14; 2 Cor. vi. 17, 18. Their company will not be made your punishment in the other world, that you would not make your choice here.

Lastly, If the hope of not being gathered with sinners in the other world, puts you on the study of universal purity, 1 John iii. 3. The hope that ungodly sinners and hypocrites have of this tends to make them secure in sin, and leaves them at ease in the embraces of some one lust or other; the reason is because their concern that way is only to be freed from misery, not from sin. But the hope of the sincere is a lively one, a hope to be freed from sin, 1 Pet. i. 3. and this makes them bestir themselves against it in time impartially, Psal. cxix. 6.

USE ult. Let me exhort all of you now to be in due care and concern, that your souls be not gathered with sinners in the other world. This due care and concern is very extensive, and therefore I will branch out this exhortation in several particulars. And,

1. Lay the matter of the other world to heart, and be no longer careless about what shall be your lot in it, Rom. xiii. 11, 12. A careless unconcerned life about the other world, will make a frightful awakening at death, Luke xii. 20. If you were to be removed out of a farm or a cot-house, you would look out for another before hand: and since you are to remove out of this world, look out for a comfortable settlement in the other, and shew yourselves men, wise men, and not fools.

2. Delay it no longer; for it is no due concern that admits of one day's delay; the reason is ere to-morrow come, your soul may be gathered with sinners, and staked down with them for eternity, Heb. iii. 15. "To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." No doubt there are many in hell, who once hoped never to come there, and to have set all to rights before gathering time; but the misery was, it came ere they were aware, and swept them away with sinners. They have been carried off in childhood, that hoped to be religious youths; and they have died in their youth who hoped to make all right by the time they should enter in age. The little sleep, the little slumber they indulged themselves in, proved their ruin; for their poverty came upon them as one that travelleth, and their want as an armed man.

3. Let your souls be now gathered unto Christ by faith in the bond of the covenant, Gen. xlix. 10. He is the Captain of salvation, and none come to heaven but at his back, John xiv. 6. as the members of his mystical body, Eph. v. 23. Whosoever are not united to him, and brought personally within the bond of his covenant, will be left to be gathered with sinners. Therefore consider the covenant offered to you in the gospel, and sincerely take hold of it, as you would not so be gathered.

4. Give up with the society of sinners here, I mean not absolutely; but make them no more your choice, your familiar companions; for death will gather every one to his own people; and therefore "he that walketh with wise men shall be wise; but a companion of fools shall be destroyed," Prov. xiii. 20. The blessed man is known by the company he chuses, and most delights in, Psal. i. 1. And he that is not concerned to separate from the company of sinners here, is in no due concern not to be gathered with them in the other world; for it is vain to think to live with sinners, and die with saints.

5. Lay by your malignity against professors of religion, against seriousness, and godly exercises. Calmly consider what ye would be at. Are you really not able to endure any appearance of religion, seriousness, and godly exercises? Then there is nothing for you, but to be gathered with sinners in the other world, where you will see nothing like it for ever. But if you have any the least thoughts or hopes of heaven, you are quite unreasonable to think to get there, while you bear such a grudge against the very first draughts of that which is carried to perfection there. I wonder what sort of a heaven they imagine to themselves, that have a heart rising at holiness; what kind of men and women they expect to see there, that are always sure to have a thrust at any serious person here, however they have a vail to cast over the godless and profane.

6. Associate yourselves with the godly; gather together with those that you would be gathered with in the other world, Psal. cxix. 63, "I am a companion of all them that fear thee," says David, "and of them that keep thy precepts." If you mind to lodge with them at the journey's end, it is reasonable to travel on the way with them too, and not with those that are holding a quite contrary route. Let not the faults you espy about them make you despise their society; there are no faultless companions to be had in this world; but it must be a dreadful cast of spirit, that makes every body's faults tolerable but theirs. That must spring from a deep-rooted enmity. But a lover of the King will reverence his children, though in rags; and God tries your love to him by the faults he has left in his people, 1 John v. 1. Psal. xvi. 2, 3.

7. Do not make light of withdrawing or absenting from the congregation of the Lord's people in public ordinances. The Sabbath congregations are the thing that in all the earth is likest to heaven; and therefore they are that which has most of the saint's heart, Psal. xxvi. 8, "Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth." Let the thoughts of the gathering with the one great congregation in the upper house, recommend the gathering together with the congregations in the lower. From whatever principles or motives people forsake the congregations of the saints here in public ordinances, they must either be gathered with them in the other world, or with sinners; there will be no separate heaven for them there.

Lastly, Carefully keep off the way of sinners here, and let your whole life be a going forth by the footsteps of the flock, Cant. i. 7, 8. Heb. vi. 12. As is your course now, so must your end be. If you go the way of sinners, in this world, ye will be gathered with them in the other; if ye go the way of saints, ye will be gathered with them there.

To enforce this exhortation,

(1.) Consider the importance of your gathering in the other world, than which nothing can be greater. You have had the other world described to you in both its parts; and I may obtest you by all the joys and glories of heaven, that you lay this matter to heart; and by the dismalness of the place, the horrors of the society, and the dreadfulness of the state of sinners in hell, that you be in concern that your souls be not gathered there with them.

(2.) Make of your other concerns what you will, if you see not to this in the first place, ye are ruined to all intents and purposes, Matth. xvi. 26. "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Nothing will compensate this loss.

(3.) This is the only proper time for that concern, wherein it may be effectual; 2 Cor. vi. 2, "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." If you miss it, in vain will ye cry; for a deaf ear will be given to all your cries, Prov. i. 24, and downwards.

Lastly, The gathering there will be eternal, and unalterable for ever; and therefore it highly concerns you now, that your souls be not gathered with sinners then.

Wherefore, upon the whole, let me obtain of you, (1.) That you will take some serious thoughts of the other world in both parts of it. (2.) That you will inquire what case you are in for it. And, (3.) That you will lay down measures timely, that your souls be not gathered with sinners there. May the Lord persuade and incline your hearts unto this course.

THE IMPROVEMENT OF LIFE IN THIS WORLD TO THE RAISING A GOOD NAME, THE BEST BALANCE FOR THE PRESENT, FOR THE VANITY AND MISERY OF HUMAN LIFE: AND THE GOOD MAN'S DYING-DAY BETTER THAN HIS BIRTH-DAY.

The substance of several Sermons preached at Ettrick, in the year 1730.

Eccl. vii. 1.

A good name is better than precious ointment; and the day of death, than the day of one's birth.

Never man more livelily represented the vanity of this world and human life, than Solomon did, whose wisdom and wealth gave him the fairest occasion to discover the best that could be made of it. He represents it in its best shapes, as a very heap of vanity and vexation, in the preceding part of this book. And indeed the vanity of human life is undeniable. Man, as to this world, is born crying, lives complaining, and after all, dies disappointed. But is there no remedy, no solid consolation in this case? Yes, but it must be brought from the consideration of the other world, and this life improved for reaching a happy life there. "A good name is better than precious ointment, and the day of death than the day of one's birth.

The scope of these words is, to point men away from the vanities of this life, and from this life itself, unto something that is better and will give rest. Is any man affected with the vanity of human life, and would fain know what is best for him? Then let him know,

1. A good name is best, "better than precious ointment," which was a thing highly prized in the eastern countries. A good name is that savoury character among good men which riseth from a good life, casting forth its savour like good ointment. It is said of Christ, Cant. i. 3, that "his name is as ointment poured forth;" but all the saints partake of that anointing, Psal. xlv. 7, "God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." Wherever grace is, it exerts itself in the course of a gracious conversation, holy actions, which procure a good name to the party, in spite of all that the malice of the world can do. It is not a mere name, which a hypocrite may have; but a name raised on a solid foundation of grace and true piety.

Now that is "better than precious ointment," *i. e.* the best things of this present world, that carnal men set their hearts on.

(1.) It is better than all the world's wealth, that goes under the name of oil, Deut. xxxiii. 24, "And of Asher he said,—Let him dip his foot in oil." To do a good action, is better than to gain a worldly advantage. A course of piety, and the just character of a holy life, is preferable to riches, Prov. xxii. 1. So the name of poor Lazarus remains savoury, while the name of the rich glutton stinks.

(2.) It is better than all worldly pleasures and delights of sense, expressed by ointment and perfume, Prov. xxvii. 9, "Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart." The testimony of one's own conscience for godly sincerity will rejoice the heart more, 2 Cor. i. 12. Lay the perfumed fool on a sick-bed or death-bed, these things avail nothing, while he is galled with the remembrance of an ill-spent life; but conscience of integrity will bear up a man in the face of death, 1 John iii. 21. Beloved, if our hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God." 2 Sam. xxiii. 5, "Although my house be not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure; for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow."

(5.) It is better than all worldly honours, for kings were anointed to testify the conferring of that dignity on them. Men cannot carry their worldly honours into the other world with them; death treats the king and the peasant alike; but the character of piety outlives death, and will be owned and regarded in the other world, Rev. iii. 12. When wicked men shall be condemned in their actions in which they applauded themselves, and others flattered them; the saints will receive Heaven's approbation of their holy actions, "Well done, good and faithful servants."

Wherefore the best thing to balance the misery of human life for the present, is to be good, and do good. That is the great lesson that Solomon gives us here. Look on human life in all the periods of it, childhood, youth, middle age, and old age; and ye will find it is but just so many stages of vanity, whereof some are past, and others passing. Look on it in the various circumstances of it, prosperity and adversity, health and sickness, wealth and penury; and you shall find it but vanity cast in different shapes. Turn up what side of it you will, the young or the old, the single or married state, it is larded with vanity on every side. Only consider it as an opportunity of being and doing good, and so it is a substantial thing; and so very substantial in that respect, that it may well balance all the miseries that attend it. But take away that, and it is at best but an useless burden, Psal. lxxxix. 47.

2. Death, the passing into the other world, is best; the dying-day is best, "better than the birth-day." It is hard to believe that; and if men frame their sentiments according to the prevailing opinion of this world, they will never believe it; but if they frame it according to the doctrine of the other world, they must needs believe it as it is represented in this text.

Ye have heard that there is another world; a lower part of it, the region of horror; to which death is the passage for sinners, whose dying day must therefore be their most doleful day, in the view of which ye have been exhorted to cry, "Gather not my soul with sinners." But ye have heard also, that there is a higher part of that world, a region of perfect bliss and happiness, to which death is also the passage for saints or persons that have got the good name; now if you believe that doctrine, you must needs conclude from it, that the day of such a one's death is better than the day of his birth, which is the thing here meant. And since we have offered a view of the dark side of the cloud, the gathering with sinners in the other world; it is just we offer a view too of the bright side of the cloud, the gathering with saints there.

There is a comparison here of two of the days of human life, both of them specially remarkable. The one is the first day of our life here, the birth-day, wherein we come into this world out of the womb. The other is the last day of our life here, the death-day, wherein we go out of this into the other world. The question is, Which of the two is the best day, the most desirable in itself? The subject is determined in the first clause, to be the man with the good name, who has been savoury in his life, being and doing good. And Solomon decides the question with respect to such a one, roundly telling us, The day of death is better than the day of *his* birth, *Heb.* namely, the man with the good name. When he came into the world at his birth, his friends rejoiced, they thought it a good day; when he goes out of this world into the other, they mourn, thinking it a sad day. But think they as they will, it is the best day of the two; and were it not the partition betwixt the two worlds, we would see it to our conviction.

Wherefore the best thing to balance the misery of human life for the future to a good man, is to die, and leave this world and the life in it. That is the lesson we are taught here. The weight of glory that death will bring him to in the other world, will absolutely downweigh all the misery of life here. The bliss of the lodging he comes to there, will more than compensate all the hardships of the way; that he shall say, "O that happy life in the lower world, that made way for my entrance hither into this upper world! Who

would not gladly have embraced Methuselah's tack of that life, for to get this!"

From the text thus explained, ariseth the two following points of doctrine, viz.

Doct. I. The improving of our life in this world to the raising up a well grounded good name and savoury character in it, is the best balance for the present for the vanity and misery attending our life, better than the most savoury earthly things.

Doct. II. To one who has so lived, as to obtain the good name, his dying-day will be better than his birth-day, quite downweighing all the vanity and misery of life in this world.

I shall speak to each of these in order.

Doct. I. The improving of our life in this world to the raising up a well grounded good name and savoury character in it, is the best balance for the present for the vanity and misery attending our life, better than the most savoury earthly things.

In discoursing from this doctrine, I shall,

I. Lay before you some things supposed in it.

II. Shew what is the well-grounded good name, that is the balance of the vanity and misery of this life.

III. What is the improvement of life, whereby that good name may be raised.

IV. Confirm the point, That this improvement of life is the best balance for the present for the vanity and misery attending our life, better than the most savoury earthly things.

V. Make some improvement.

I. I shall lay before you some things supposed in the doctrine.

1. It supposeth that there is a vanity and misery that is the inseparable attendant of human life in this world. No man in life is free of it, nor can be, Psal. xxxix. 6, "Surely every man walketh in a vain shew." No circumstances of life can avail to the shifting it off; it accompanies the crown and sceptre, as well as the beggar's seat on the dunghill, Eccl. i. 2. "Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher, vanity of vanites, all is vanity." Psal. xxxix. 5. "Verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity." Men may change their wilderness-station, but while here will still be in a wilderness. They may get out of one vanity and misery, but it will always be but a falling into another.

2. Every man will find himself obliged to seek for some allay of that vanity and misery of life, that he may be enabled to comport with it, Psal. vi. 6. This makes a busy world, every one seeking something to make his hard seat soft. For the whole world is in a

sickly condition of spirit, witness their need of the great Physician, Matth. ix. 12. Hence there is a mighty restlessness, turning and shifting from one thing to another, for some allay of the present uneasiness.

3. It is natural for men to seek an allay to the vanity and misery of life, in earthly things, Psal. vi. 6. "There may be many that say, Who will shew us any good?" They seek precious ointment, as it were, to master the rank savour that is about human life. For this cause the pleasures, profits, and honours of the world are sought after, and employed as plasters for that sore; that, by means of them, they may be enabled to comfort with the vanity and misery of life.

4. But the best of earthly things will make but a sorry plaster for that sore; they will not be able to balance the vanity and misery of life, but with them all life may be rendered sapless, through the predominant vanity and misery of it. All Haman's honours were not able to season life to him, while Mordecai bowed not; neither could Ahab's kingdom, in the want of Naboth's vineyard; nor Belshazzar's festival joys and pleasures, while the hand-writing was seen on the wall. That way it but seeking to allay one vanity with another; a dead fly will make the ointment itself stink; a day's pleasure will not balance an hour's pain; nor honour for years, blot out the disgrace that a moment fixes.

Lastly, Howbeit, the improving of life to the raising a well-grounded good name, will balance the vanity and misery of life effectually; so that he who has reached that kind of living, has what is well worth the enduring all the miseries of life for. There is an excellency and good in it, that downweigh all the evils attending life.

II. I shall shew what is the well-grounded good name, that is the balance of the vanity and misery of human life. It is the name of religion, raised from the reality thereof in the person that has the name. And it is, I say,

1. The name of religion, and no less; for there is nothing truly good separate from religion, Matth. vii. 18. Men have attempted to raise themselves a name from other things, some from their wealth, some from their wit, valour, buildings, beauty, &c. But these may make a vain name, which at death will go out with a stink without religion. Only religion can make a good name, being the only thing of value with a good God, and among good men; without which all things else will be but cyphers, the name of nothing.

2. It is raised on the reality of religion, and no less; for a mere shew of religion is but a vain and empty thing, which will dwindle

to nothing with other vanities. That will make but a name before men, not before God; "I know you not," said the Bridegroom to the foolish virgins, Matth. xxv. 12. They come under the name of virgins, but Christ will not know them by that name.

We may take up that good name in three parts.

1. *Friend of God*, Jam. ii. 23. That is the part of the good name, that designs the man's state of peace and reconciliation with God through Christ. There is no good name without this, Jam. iv. 4. And this is the name put on all endowed with true religion, John xv. 14. a name better than sons and daughters, in whom men's name is preserved, Isa. lvi. 5.

2. *Faithful to the Lord*, Acts xvi. 15. That designs the man's temper and way towards God. He is a sincere and upright Christian, endeavouring to approve himself to God in all things. He makes the will of God his rule, the word of God his oracle, the love of God his principle, and the glory of God his chief end in life. A noble name, that God will know him by, in the other world, Matth. xxv. 21. "Well done, thou good and faithful servant," &c.

3. *Useful to men*, serving his generation, Acts xiii. 35. That designs the man's temper and way towards his neighbour. He is not a common nuisance of society, ensnaring and mischievous to those about him, whereby some make themselves a name that will rot, Eccl. ix. ult. Nor yet an useless member of society, concerned for none but himself. But a profitable member, laying out himself to do good to others as he has access, Esth. x. ult.

This is that good name that is the best balance for the present, for the vanity and misery of human life.

III. We come next to shew what is the improvement of life, whereby that good name may be raised. This is a weighty point that nearly concerns us all, to know those things that will make our life savoury before God and men. I shall unfold it in the following particulars. If you would raise up to yourselves that good name in life,

First, Improve your life by a personal and saving entering into the covenant of grace, and uniting with Christ, by believing on his name. Here are three things which we have access to in this life, as vain and miserable as it is, and in it only; and if we so improve it, we will be called friends of God.

1. Personally entering into his covenant, Isa. lvi. 4, 5. "For thus saith the Lord unto the eunuchs that keep my Sabbaths, and choose the things that please me, and take hold of my covenant; even unto them will I give in mine house, and within my walls, a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters; I will give them an

everlasting name, that shall not be cut off." The name of your father Adam's house, given you at your birth into this world, is stranger and enemy to God, Eph. ii. 12; Rom. viii. 7. In the gospel God's covenant of peace is offered to you; consider while you are in life, what you are doing, and take hold of that covenant, with all the seriousness and awful solemnity ye are capable of in life. So shall ye get the good name, the new name, friend of God, as confederate with Heaven, Eph. ii. 12, 13. If ye ask how ye shall do that? the answer is,

2. Unite with Christ. He is the head of the covenant, and we enter into it by uniting with him, John x. 9. "I am the door; by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved." Isa. xlix. 8. "I will give thee for a covenant of the people." Uniting with Christ, thy soul shall be wrapt up in the bond of the covenant of grace, made with him, for him and his; even as thy relation to Adam wraps thee up in the bond of the covenant of works, made with him for him and his. Come then, thou art now in life, improve it to thy union with Christ; so shalt thou have a ground whence the good name must infallibly rise, Col. i. 27. "Christ in you, the hope of glory." Make this the business of your life in the first place, to get Christ in you. Live and travail for this, Gal. iv. 19. It alone is able to balance all the misery of life. If ye ask, how ye shall unite with Christ, the answer is,

3. Believe on his name; that is the way to unite with him, Eph. iii. 17. "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." Believing on him, thou shalt be in a state of union with him, as the branches with the vine, and the superstructure with the foundation; so shalt thou be called by a new name, the good name. John i. 12. "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name."

Ques. But what is it to believe on his name?

Ans. 1. To believe the gospel-report; namely, That Christ is by his Father's appointment the Saviour of the world, and your Saviour to save you from sin and wrath, Isa. liii. 1. "Who hath believed our report?" compared with 1 John iv. 14. "And we have seen and do testify, that the Father sent his Son to be the Saviour of the world." and v. 11. "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life; and this life is in his Son." Set yourself to believe this; ye will not find it so easy, as you imagine perhaps. But it is impossible to receive Christ, or believe on him, without believing this first, John iii. 27. "A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven."

2. To trust on him accordingly, that he will save you from sin

and wrath, freely by his grace, through his righteousness, blood, and Spirit, Acts xv. 11. "We believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved. Rom. i. 17. "Therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith." Set yourself to this; for herein the uniting nature of faith lies, inasmuch as in this act of trusting on him, the soul is, (1.) Divorced from sin, as well as careful to escape wrath; the heart being alienated from sin, set to be rid of it and made holy, which is the immediate effect of saving illumination, the discovery of Christ made to the soul in the gospel by the Spirit working faith, 1 Cor. ii. 4, 5; Matth. xiii. 45, 46. (2.) Carried wholly off its own bottom for these ends, self-confidence, creature-confidence, law-confidence; *i. e.* confidence in any work or good qualification of our own, are all undetermined together by a touch of heaven's hand; so that the soul has not one foot left to stand on, not a twig without or within him to grip to before the Lord but Christ alone, and what is in Christ, his free grace, righteousness, blood and Spirit, Phil. iii. 3. (3.) Laid wholly on Christ for these ends, as the stones of the building on the foundation, cleaving and clinging to him, relying on him, who if he should fail it, all would come down together. But it is impossible that such an event should take place, since Christ is the foundation stone laid by his Father, to bear all the weight of sinners laid on him; and therefore knits with the soul laid on him, and secures it for ever, 1 Pet. ii. 6.

Improve your life then to a personal and saving entering into the covenant of grace, and uniting with Christ by believing on his name. So you shall have the good name which ye shall never lose, that will balance all the vanity and misery of life, and make your dying day better than your birth-day.

Secondly, Improve your life to a living a life of faith in this world; so shall ye get the good name, "Faithful to the Lord;" Gal. ii. 20, "The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God." Rev. xvii. 14. "They that are with him, are called, and chosen and faithful." All the improvement most men make of life, is to live a life of sense, eat, drink, do worldly business, sport, play, &c. So all that they make of life, is the life of a beast, which have the delights of sense in greater perfection than what they for their hearts can reach. And so their name shall be written, in the earth, an ill name, a disgraceful name, Luke xii. 20. Jam. iv. 3, 4. But live ye a life of faith, and so ye will make of your life the life of a Christian, a saint, a child of God, an heir of glory, a faithful servant to the Lord.

Now to raise up the good name, "Faithful to the Lord," by a

life of faith, your faith must cast your life into the following mould, which will be impracticable but by faith.

1. Let it be a life of believing and dependance on God in Christ for all. Live believing his word in all parts of it, 2 Chron. xx. 20.; believing the divine authority, equity, and goodness of his commands, Psal. cxix. 128. the faithfulness and certainty of his promises, Rom. iv. 20, 21. the justice and truth of his threatenings, Isa. lvi. 2. Depend entirely and trust on him at all times, Isa. xxiv. 4. for all things you need, Prov. iii. 5, 6. for happiness, light, strength, and success in temporals and spirituals. Depend on him alone while ye live.

(1.) For your happiness and soul's rest, Heb. iv. 3. Never expect it from the most promising creature, but look for it firmly from a God in Christ, Psal. xvii. ult.

(2.) For light to know your duty in all the steps of your way. Never venture yourself to your own management, be the way never so plain, Jer. x. 23. for at that rate ye stumble in an even road. But let your hope be in the promise, Psal. xxxii. 8. "I will instruct thee, and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go; I will guide thee with mine eyes."

(3.) For strength to perform every duty in life to God or man. Lean not to your own stock of strength and resolutions. The good name is that of a branch, not of a root, 2 Tim. ii; 1 John xv. 5. And so no duty whatsoever that God calls you to, shall be above your reach as to acceptable performance, Phil. iv. 13. "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

(4.) For your success in all ye set yourselves to in your temporal and spiritual concerns, Josh. i. 8, 9. Remember always that Heaven keeps the negative over us in all our attempts, Lam. iii. 37. Hence it is said, "The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong," &c. Eccl. ix. 11.

2. Let it be a life of devotion, Psal. cxix. 38. That makes a part of the good name in the Bible, despise and scoff at it who will, Luke ii. 25. of Simeon it is said, he was just and devout. And the name of devout Christians will be in honour, when the memory of the profane shall rot. Let it be a life of devotion.

(1.) In respect of the truths of God made known to you, reckoning every truth sacred, and cleaving thereto against all hazards and opposition, Prov. xxiii. 23. I do not advise you to break with every one that is not of your mind, but only to quit no truth to any. This the apostle directs, Phil. iii. 15, 16, "Let us, therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded; and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Neverthe-

less, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing." And devotion leads to it. It is a part of the comfort at death; hence Paul says, 2 Tim. iv. 7. "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith."

(2.) In respect of the worship of God, Phil. iii. 3. If you have a father, you must honour him; if a master, you must regard him; otherwise you will have a very ill name, and you will smart for it. Ye have a God that made you, if ye live regardless of him, where is your good name, what kind of a day can ye imagine the day of death will be to you? But be devout worshippers of him, in secret, private, and public, shewing reverence in the frame of your heart and outward gestures; so shall ye have the good name.

3. Let it be a life of heavenly-mindedness, and contempt of the world, Phil. iii. 20. So Enoch got the good name of walking with God, Gen. v. 24. and the worthies, Heb. xi. 13,—16. Covetousness and worldly-mindedness in professors of religion mar their good name, Phil. iii. 19. It was a noble testimony that Luther had from his enemies, *Germanica illa bestia non curat aurum.* Friends of the world cannot be faithful to God.

4. Let it be a life of Christian deportment under trials and afflictions in life. Every body will have something laid before them for their trials, wherein they must stand candidates for the other world, to be disposed of there as they acquit themselves in their trials for it here, Rev. iii. 21. So patience, resignation, holy cheerfulness under the cross, are necessary to raise the good name, Jam. i. 4. And by an unbecoming carriage under the cross, people may lose all the good name they had before, Mark x. 21, 22. Wherefore the exhortation is, "My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him," Heb. xii. 5.

Lastly, Let it be a life of uprightness, the same where no eye sees you but God's, as where the eyes of men are upon you. The faith of God's omniscience leads to this; hence Joseph said when tempted to sin by his lewd mistress, Gen. xxxix. 9, "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" O what name do the practisers of secret wickedness think they will have with God, who are at liberty to sin if they can do it unseen of men? God will read out their name with disgrace before all the world at length, Prov. xxvi. 26, "Whose hatred is covered by deceit, his wickedness shall be showed before the whole congregation."

Thirdly, Improve your life to the living of a life beneficial to mankind, profitable to your fellow-creatures, diffusing a benign influence through the world, as ye have access; so that when you are gone,

the world may be convinced they have lost a useful member that sought their good; so shall ye have the good name, "Useful to men," Acts xiii. 36. But there is a fourfold life that will raise this name.

1*st*, The *noxious* life, that some live in the world like foxes in the mountains, biting, devouring, and worrying others; they cause their terror in the land of the living, but will leave their name for a curse. Better one had never been in the world, than to be in it for mischief; to be in it, as mice and rats are in it, destroying much good.

2*dly*, The *trifling* life, that some live in the world, like the leviathan in the sea, Psal. cvi. 29; laughing, sporting, playing, idling, and trifling away a lifetime, without doing any substantial good for themselves or others. Such make their life a dream, and their death will be a terrible awakening.

3*dly*, The *selfish* life, that some live in the world, like the oyster within its own shell, careful for nothing but their own sweet self, Phil. ii. 21. The world will be at no loss for the want of them, reaping no advantage by the having of them. If they were to go out of the world, there is none before them in heaven that ever they helped a step forward to it, to receive them into everlasting habitations, Luke xvi. 9.

4*thly*, The *carnal earthly* life, that some live in the world, like the mole ever digging in the earth, never looking upward. These are busy in life, but doing nothing, nothing to the purpose of a better world. They may indeed be some way useful to others, but then it is only as the brutes are useful in things of this world. But that will never raise to men the name of Christian usefulness.

But there is an edifying life that will raise it, 1 Cor. viii. 1, "Charity edifieth." The love of our neighbour springing from the love of God, will set men to seek the good of their neighbours, and so edify or build up the world, in which live so many to destroy and pull down. If we live to ourselves, we will die to ourselves too. But let us know that we are to live in this world for the honour of God, and for the good of mankind our fellows in it; and we miss the most noble end of human life, so far as we miss of these.

There is reason that every one ask himself, For what use am I in the world? How do I fill up my room in it for the common good? And if we mind for happiness in the other world, we must set ourselves to be useful to men in this world, and live to be useful in it, Rom. xiv. 19, "Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another." Chap. xv. 2, "Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good

to edification." We are members one of another; and that member that is not useful for the rest, is a rotten member, to be cut off.

Object. Magistrates and ministers may, but what access have we to be useful to the world, or to raise up that good name to ourselves? *Ans.* Follow these rules of life, and ye shall raise to yourselves the good name, how private soever ye be.

1. Cast the world a copy by your good example, Matth. v. 16, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Many an ill example is set before them for their destruction, Matth. xviii. 7. Give them your good example yet for their edification; and live as meanly and privately as ye will, ye shall be as useful in the world, as a beacon is at sea letting shipmen see the rocks they are to hold off, Phil. ii. 15, 16, "That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; holding forth the word of life." And give them a good example,

(1.) Of *devotion* and piety towards God, in a strict and religious observance of your duty towards him. This will be a practical testimony for him, a light that will condemn the world's profane contempt of him, Prov. xxviii. 4.

(2.) Of *exact justice* and truth, in all your doings and sayings with men, Zech. viii. 16, "Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbour; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates." The world is sunk in a gulph of injustice and falsehood, and the multitude of those that make no conscience of justice in their deeds and truth in their words, is so great, that they are thought nothing of. Come, row against this stream.

(3.) Of *sobriety* in moderating your own passions, with a spirit of peacefulness, meekness, and forbearance, Matth. xi. 29. This is necessary for the good name, and without it it will be marred, Prov. xxv. ult.

This is a life-preaching of the gospel to the world, to which every one of you has access, Tit. ii. 11, 12, "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men; teaching us, that denying ungodliness, and worldly lusts, we should live soberly righteously, and godly in this present world." And that is an useful man in the world, that on good grounds can say, when he is to leave it, with the apostle, "Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe," 1 Thess. ii. 10.

2. Be of a beneficent disposition, disposed to do good to mankind as you have access, Gal. vi. 10. Some are of the household of faith,

have a special concern to do good to them; others are not, ye must have a concern for them too; though they are not saints, they are men of the same common nature with yourselves, Luke vi. 35. We should greedily embrace an opportunity of doing good to others, thinking with ourselves, That is the proper business of our life. And be disposed to do good,

(1.) In temporals as ye have access, Heb. xiii. 16. "But to do good, and to communicate, forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." There is nobody but some one time or way or other may be profitable to others. The duties of humanity are of great usefulness in the world, being kind, merciful, and compassionate to them that are in distress, or need, Col. iii. 12. It has a great encouragement by promise, Prov. iii. 9, 10; Psal. xli. 1, &c.

(2.) In spirituals. There are none of the children of Adam, but have immortal souls that must live for ever. And true grace is natively communicative, as one candle serves to light another, Gen. xviii. 19. "I know him," says God of Abraham, "that he will command his children, and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment." And says the woman of Samaria to the men of the city, John iv. 29. "Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did; is not this the Christ?" So ye should be ready to be useful to others, according to their spiritual exigence, instructing the ignorant, warning the secure, encouraging good motions, bearing down bad ones, &c.

3. Lay out yourselves to forward the usefulness of others, 1 Cor. xvi. 10, 11. Whomsoever ye see disposed and employed to be useful, help them forward, facilitate their work, strengthen their hands what you can, so shall ye be useful to the greatest purposes at second hand. The water cannot grind the corn, but it can turn about the wheel, and the wheel the millstone, and so the millstone will grind it, and so the water is useful for grinding, in such sort that when it fails there is no doing it. So the meanest of the Colossians could be useful for declaring the mystery of Christ, Col. iv. 3. "Withal, praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds." People generally think little of weakening the hands of those that are useful; but I have often thought that it is one of the most miserable uses of being in the world, to be in it for a weight hung upon them that would be useful, Matth. xiii. 13.

Lastly, Be conscientious in the performance of the duties of your station and relations, 1 Cor. vii. 24. "Brethren, let every man wherein he is called, therein abide with God." That is the sphere

of usefulness that God has allotted to you; every one may be useful that way; and no body can be useful otherwise, whatever they may vainly imagine. It is exemplified in the case of the priests, Mal. ii. 6; of wives, 1 Pet. iii. 1; and of servants, Tit. ii. 9, 10. To pretend to usefulness without our sphere, is the effect of pride and presumption, and is the same absurdity in moral conduct, as it would be in nature for the moon and stars to set up for the rule of the day, the sun contenting himself with the rule of the night.

Thus ye have the improvement of life, by which the good name may be raised.

IV. I proceed to confirm the point, That this improvement of life is the best balance for the present, for the vanity and misery attending our life, better than the most savoury earthly things. And here I shall shew,

1. That it is the best balance for the present, for the vanity and misery of life.

2. That it is better than the best and most savoury earthly things.

First, I am to shew, that this improvement of life is the best balance for the present, for the vanity and misery of life.

1. Hereby a man answers the end of his creation, for which he was sent into the world; and surely the reaching of such a noble end is the best balance for all the hardships in the way of it. The merchant toils in travelling, the husbandman in plowing and sowing; but the gaining of their end downweighs all that toil to them. The chief end of man's life in the world is to enjoy God as our friend, to be dutiful and faithful to him as our Benefactor, and useful to men our fellow-creatures; if we reach that noble end, what matter what hardships we made through unto it? If we miss it, we have nothing that will counterbalance them.

2. It brings such a substantial and valuable good out of our life, as will downweigh all the inconveniences that attend our life in the world. Gather the vanities and miseries of human life together, its frailties, weaknesses, disappointments, crosses, &c., they will make a great heap; and put them in the balance with bare life itself, with mere worldly comforts and conveniences, they would downweigh it, Psalm lxxxix. 47. One may say, these comforts are not worth the living for, at the rate of that vanity and misery that attend them. But here are three things, namely, our own happiness in God's favour, the honour of God, and the good of mankind; any one of these, and much more all of them together, is worth living for under all the inconveniences of life, and will downweigh all the misery of life in this world; there being more good in the one, than there is evil in the other.

3. It brings such valuable good into our life, as more than counterbalanceth all the vanity and misery of it. And that is, (1.) A present comfort and satisfaction, within one's self, 2 Cor. i. 12. The soul-satisfaction there is in the reflection, that God is one's friend, that they have got something done for the honour of God, and for the good of their fellow-creatures, is enough to counterbalance the vanity and misery of life, Prov. xiv. 14. (2.) A future prospect, namely, of complete happiness, which must needs turn the scales entirely, be the miseries of life what they will, Rom. viii. 35—39.

Lastly, That good name well grounded is a thing that may cost much indeed, but it cannot be too dear bought, Prov. xxiii. 23. Whatever it cost you, you will be gainers, if ye get it, Phil. iii. 8. Let men and devils raise the market to the highest pitch they can to increase the difficulty of your obtaining it, they can never raise it so high as to give you ground to stop bidding for it. This has been the concurring testimony of all the saints, confessors, and martyrs from the beginning, Heb. xi. 1—39.

Secondly, I shall show that this improvement of life is better than the best and most savoury earthly things.

1. It will give a greater pleasure to the mind, than any earthly thing can do, Prov. iii. 17; Psalm iv. 7; 2 Cor. i. 17. This appears in its bearing up the heart, under the greatest trials and hardships. What can all the delights of sense, profits, and pleasures of the world, avail a dying man? But this good name rejoiceth the heart in the face of death. This made confessors joyful under the loss of their substance, and martyrs cheerfully embrace flames and gibbets.

2. It will last longer than they will all do, Psalm cxii. 6. Abraham was rich in silver and gold, and Job in stocking: but these things of theirs are all gone now, but their good name they raised to themselves is yet to the fore. All earthly things have a principle of corruption in them, rust eats the silver, moths eat the fine clothes, and our bodies themselves will rot; only the good name is incorruptible, and will not be eaten up either by the teeth of malice or time, Is. lvi. 5.

3. It is the only thing we can keep to ourselves in the world to our advantage, when we leave the world. We must all leave the world, and then whatever riches, wealth, honours we have in it, we must leave them to others; only what name we leave behind us, we will keep to ourselves when we are gone, we will be our own heirs in that, Matt. vi. 19, 20. If it be an ill name, there is our disadvantage; we leave nothing to ourselves in the world, but what

stinks in it. If it be the good name, it will be savoury after us, when we are away. So,

4. The good name will, after we are away, be savoury in the world, when the things that others set their hearts on will make them stink when they are gone. How savoury is the name of Lazarus, Luke xvi. at this day, notwithstanding all his poverty and sores? How is the name of the rich man buried with himself, known only by his being a sensual gluttonous man, a name that every one abhors? Days have been, wherein some have been rigid oppressors, and raised wealth to themselves that way; while others were patient under their oppressions. There have been great and honourable men in the world, some of them sitting on a throne, who lived in whoredom, persecution, blood, and murder; while others have Christianly submitted to be pent up in prisons, shot, hanged on gibbets by their orders; they are all gone now, the oppressors and persecutors, as well as the oppressed and persecuted. I appeal to the conscience of every one, which of their names is most savoury now, and which of the two would ye choose for yourselves if ye could?

Lastly, The good name will go farther than the best and most savoury things of the earth. Mary pours a box of precious ointment on Christ, which no doubt sent its savour through the whole house; but Christ paid her for it with the good name, that should send its savour through the whole world, Matt. xxvi. 13. "Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her." But ye may think, we can have no hope that ever our good name will go that wide. That is a mistake; for if we raise ourselves the good name, it will certainly be published before all the world at the last day, Rev. iii. 5, and we will carry it over the march betwixt the two worlds into the other world, ver. 12. The name of kings, princes, nobles, gentlemen, &c. will go no further with people than this world: there will be an absolute levelling of mankind in the other world; these great names will not take place there, but the good name will, and make the only difference.

I come now to the improvement of this subject.

USE I. Of information. This doctrine informs us that,

1. There is a way to get the vanity and misery of this life balanced even for the present; so that one may get a sufficient sweetening to all the bitterness of it, that they may not quite weary of life, but patiently wait their change. This discovery should be very acceptable, because it is seasonable, to all; and all should set themselves to the improving of it, as needing it.

2. That way is the only way of a religious life, in faith and holiness. By such a course, and no other, can the good name be raised. It is not being great, but good; not being high, but useful, that will raise it. In vain do men think to make themselves a name by their wealth and honour, while they are not careful to improve these to the glory of God and the good of others; for all they will get thereby will be but a blaze of a name, that will soon go out with a stink; or to balance the miseries of life, by the chase of worldly profits and pleasures; but these they will find attended with vanity and misery. But faith and holiness will make a lasting good name.

3. People ought to be concerned for a good name as a most precious thing; and therefore both to be and to appear good, both to have a holy practice and a holy profession; the latter as well as the former being necessary to raise it, and the former as well as the latter. A holy practice without a holy profession is a contradiction; for the one is a necessary part of the other, which is a light that must needs discover itself, Matt. v. 16; Psalm ii. 15, 16. A holy profession without a holy practice is pharisaical and hypocritical; and the name it will raise being without a root, will be but for a moment, and that before men only.

4. The right improving of life is the way to the good name. It is the way to obtain it, and secure it. Thus every one has access to it, Isa. lvi. 4, 5. "For thus saith the Lord unto the eunuchs that keep my sabbaths, and choose the things that please me, and take hold of my covenant," &c. Sons and daughters must die themselves, and their name be extinct; flourishing families may soon be rooted out. But a life rightly improved will leave a savoury name when it is at an end; and will keep up the name of those that have neither son nor daughter, and that for ever.

USE II. Of reproof to,

1. Those who are in no concern for a good name. It is pitiful trifling indeed for men to hunt for an empty name before the world, in the way of vain-glory, Matth. vi. 2. But they that live careless of a well-grounded good name, being careless of their name, are careless of their souls too. They value not what he thought or said of them never so truly, so that they can but please themselves, and satisfy their own lusts for the present; that is the life of brutes concerned only for the present times, not for the time after death. It is a sad life, to live a life of sin, and afterward to leave our name for a curse.

2. Those who set up for a name, but are in no concern to improve their life for the honour of God and good of mankind. They will never get the good name that way; they may get a vain name, or

an ill name. Faith and holiness are the only pillars to rear up the good name upon.

2. Those who, under the vanity and misery of life, seek for this and the other comfort of the world to support them, but never set themselves to a Christian improvement of life to balance their afflictions and hardships. That is to be solicitous for cure, and yet to stand off from the soverign never-failing remedy.

USE ult. Of exhortation. Let the vanities and miseries attending this present life move and engage you to improve life for raising up to yourselves the good name, as the best thing to balance them for the present. Seriously consider the vanity and misery of life, and let the view of them spur to a Christian improvement. And for this cause consider,

1. What a vain and miserable thing your life on earth is, if you make not something of it for an after life, Psal. xxxix. 6. It is a fleeting, passing vanity, a vapour, a puff of wind that will soon be away. The bloom of youth soon fades, its vigour decays, and man goes as fast down as ever he rose up, and sometimes is pulled down suddenly. Every age and condition is attended with so many miseries thereto allied, that there is no rest in any part of it.

2. There is no cure for the vanity and misery of life to drive them away. Men are still working at that indeed; but in vain, Eccl. i. 15. "That which is crooked cannot be made straight; and that which is wanting cannot be numbered." Ye may as well think to turn the winter into summer, and clear the air of midges flying about in a warm summer-day. The removal thereof is reserved for the other life in the other world; but while men live in this world, there will be vanity and misery attending them.

3. The only thing valuable in this life, is, that it is an opportunity for raising a good name, that may pass with us in the other world. That is an advantage of this life that is not in the other, Eccl. ix. 10. Isa. xxxviii. 19. Take it by this handle, and you have it as a valuable good among your hands; a seed-time for eternity, an apprenticeship for heaven, a tide for Immanuel's land.

4. Every piece of the vanity and misery of this life, that comes on you, is a providential call to you to improve it as such an opportunity. The language thereof is, "Arise, depart, this is not your rest;" Cant. iv. 8. "Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from Lebanon; look from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon, from the lions' dens, from the mountains of the Leapords." Every thorn of uneasiness you find in life, is a warning to you to leave seeking your satisfaction in the empty creation, and to take up your soul's rest in God.

5. To improve it so will give a present ease and relief under the burden; though it will not take it off your back, it will strengthen you, and make you go more lightly under it, 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18. It will give you more effectual consolation under them, than all the comforts of the world can. Though ye will still be in life but as pilgrims, yet it will give you a song in the house of your pilgrimage.

It will secure you a happy life in the other world, where none of these vanities and miseries shall ever have place any more for ever. Thus ye will lay up treasure in heaven which cannot be lost, Mat. vi. 19, 20. Now is the seed time, then will be the eternal reaping of what is now sown, Gal. vi. 8.

Lastly, If ye do not so improve it, you will never taste the happiness of life. You will lose the present life as to any true happiness therein, though you may deceive yourselves with the shadow of happiness therein; yet the truth is, you have no sufficient balance for the vanity and misery of life, which you cannot miss. And then your life in the other world will be a life of unmixed misery, a thousand times worse.

To help you to this improvement,

(1.) Take some time to consider, what name you bear, and how your name savours, in heaven and earth. It will be of little value, to be savoury on earth, if it be not so in heaven too, Rev. iii. 1. But if it be savoury in heaven, it will in spite of malice be savoury on earth too, in the consciences of men, 2 Cor. iv. 2. Now this will be according to your soul's state before the Lord, and the habitual bent and course of your life and actions, 2 Cor. ii. 15, "For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved." John xv. 14, "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you."

(2.) Address yourselves to the living a life of faith and holiness, as the proper work of this life while it lasts, Isa. xxxviii. 19, "The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day; the father to the children shall make known thy truth." Dream away life no longer, trifling away precious time; but open your eyes, rouse up yourselves to mind and ply the end of your creation, 1 Cor. xv. 34, "Awake to righteousness and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God; I speak this to your shame."

Lastly, Keep in view the approach of death, as what shuts up and cuts off working time, John ix. 4. Remember it is now or never you must raise the good name. For this present state only is the state of trial; the future state is the state of retribution, wherein each will be rewarded according to his work. As the child born dead into this world, cannot be brought to life by the light thereof; so he that enters spiritually dead, and without the

good name, into the other world, will never have life nor good name there.

I shall now proceed to the consideration of the other doctrine from the text, viz.

Doct. II. To one who has so lived as to obtain the good name, his dying-day will be better than his birth-day, quite downweighing all the vanity and misery of life in this world. This is a parodox, a truth though unlikely. In handling it, I shall,

I. Discover some truths contained in it.

II. Show in what latitude this doctrine is to be understood.

III. Demonstrate the truth of this paradox, this unlikely tale, That the saint's dying-day is better than his birth-day.

IV. Apply the subject.

I. I shall discover some truths contained in this doctrine.

1. However men live, they must die. He that has had a birth-day, whatever he makes of his life, must have a dying day too, Heb. ix. 6, "It is appointed unto men once to die." The careless graceless life of the fool will not ward off death, neither will the well-improved life of the wise do it, Psal. xlix. 10. Both must lay their account with it; they that look and prepare for it will not be disappointed, and those that never mind it, it will certainly overtake.

2. The birth-day is a good day, notwithstanding all the vanity and misery of human life. This is the common sense of mankind about it. And though some have cursed it as the worst of days, that alters not the case, being the effect of a transport of passion. But it is a good day to the relations, notwithstanding the bitterness mixed with it, as our Saviour observes, John xvi. 21, "A woman when she is in travail, hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world." And so it is to the party too, as an entrance on the stage of life whereby God is glorified, and one may be prepared for a better life, Isa. xxxviii. 19, "The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day," &c.

3. The dying-day is not always so frightful as it looks; it may be a good day too. There may be a kind heart, where there is a stern countenance on occasions. As in scouring a vessel, sand and ashes first defiling it makes it to glister; so grim death brings in a perfect comeliness. The waters may be red and frightful, where yet the ground is good, and they are but shallow, passable with all safety.

4. Where the dying-day follows a well-improved life, it is better than the birth-day, however it may appear. There is this difference betwixt them, the birth-day has its fair side outmost, the dying-day has its fair side inmost; hence the former begins with joy, but opens out in much sorrow; the latter begins with sorrow, but opens out in treasures of endless joy. And certainly it is better to step through sorrow into joy, than through joy into sorrow.

5. The dying-day in that case is so very far better than the birth-day, that it quite downweighs all the former vanity and misery of life. The angelic guard conveying Lazarus into Abraham's bosom, left not his sometime sore and pinching straits the weight of a feather, being compared with the honour and glory of it, 2 Cor. iv. 17. However heavy their case has been, they remember it then as waters that fail.

Lastly, But it will not be so in the case of an ill spent life. In that case the birth-day will still keep the preference, it will be better than the dying-day, though in the mean time it would have been best of all that such had never been born, Mat. xxvi. 24. For whatever joy or sorrow they have been born to in this world, they will never taste of joy more, but be overwhelmed with floods of sorrow, when once their dying-day is come and over.

II. I shall shew in what latitude this doctrine is to be understood.

1. As to the *parties*, those who have so lived as to obtain the good name. It is to be understood of them,

(1.) *Universally*, whatever different degrees be among them in the lustre of the good name. There are children, young men, and and fathers of that name: it is more illustrious with some of them than others; for though all are alike friends of God, yet all are not alike faithful to God, and useful to men, 1 John ii. 12. But if they obtain that name at all, the day of their death will be better than that of their birth; for the lowest saint in the other world will be in better case than the greatest of men in this world.

(2.) *Inclusively*, of elect infants dying in their infancy, before they are capable of being faithful to God, or useful to men; because having the Spirit of Christ dwelling in them, whereby they are united to Christ, they are the friends of God, and if their organs were disposed, they would be faithful and useful. The seed of faithfulness and usefulness is in them, 1 John iii. 9. Only they lack opportunity, not being arrived at the use of reason, Mat. xix. 14.

Let godly parents who have sometimes laid their infants in the grave, for whom they took hold of God's covenant, know for their

comfort, that though the names of these babes are forgotten in this world by all but them, because they were so short while in it; they have the good name, a shining name in the other world, that will never be forgotten there. And the day of their death, however heavy it was to you, it was really better than the day of their birth; much sin and misery being hid from their eyes that you have felt.

(3.) *Exclusively* of all others. They that have not so lived as to obtain the good name, have neither part nor lot in this matter, Prov. xiv. 32. "The wicked is driven away in his wickedness." When men's passions are raised through the miseries of this life fretting them, death appears desirable. So it did to the murmurers, Num. xiv. 2. So to Judas, under horror for an ill spent life. But they are too hasty and inconsiderate there; for be this life as bad as it will, it is the best they can look for.

2. As to the points in comparison, the birth-day and the dying-day, it is to be understood of them,

(1.) In their formal notion as days of passing into a new world. Consider the day of the saint's birth, as a coming out of his mother's womb into our world, and the light thereof that he never saw before; and the day of his death, as a passing into the other world, which he never saw before neither. And the latter is better than the former, it is the preferable passage; it is better for him when he has got the good name to leave his body a corpse, than it was to leave the womb of his mother when he was a ripe infant.

(2.) In all circumstances whatsoever. The saint's dying-day compared with his birth-day, does so preponderate, that no circumstances whatsoever can cast the balance; suppose him born healthy and vigorous, dying in the most languishing manner, or in the greatest agonies; born heir to an estate or a crown, dying poor at a dyke-side, neglected of all; yet the day of his death, in spite of all these advantages of his birth, is better than the day of his birth.

3. As to the preference, it stands in two points.

(1.) The advantages of the saint's dying-day are preferable to the advantages of his birth-day. Cast up the sums of both in any way you can imagine, and the former will far surmount the latter, as the heavens are above the earth.

(2.) The advantages of the saint's dying-day downweigh all the disadvantages of his birth-day. This is more than the former. A man sows his seed, and he gets a crop better than what he sowed; yet perhaps when he has counted all cost and pains, these overgo the profit. But it is not so in this case. Let all the disadvantages of the saint's birth-day be considered, as a continued chain of num-

berless links from his birth to his death; and his dying-day will downweigh them all. It will remain an eternal truth, That such a dying day was well worth wading through all these miseries of life unto it, let them appear in their most frightful shapes, that ever they appeared in unto mortals.

III. We are next to demonstrate the truth of this paradox, this unlikely tale, That the saint's dying-day is better than his birth-day. It appears most firm truth from the following considerations.

First, The day of the saint's birth clothed him with a body of weak and frail flesh, and so clogged him; the day of his death looses the clog, and sets him free, clothing him with a house that will never clog him, 2 Cor. v. 1—3. Do not think your bodies are you; they are something belonging to you, but not you; for you will be to the fore, thinking, moving, acting, when they will be lying rotting in the church-yard. It is the soul that is you, which being housed in the earthly tabernacle, is clogged thereby. Indeed the souls of the wicked are clogged far heavier at death, with anguish and despair. But the dying-day sets the saint perfectly free, like a prisoner out of the prison, or a bird out of the cage, Luke ii. 29. Consider,

1. In the day of his birth he was an helpless infant, that could do nothing but weep and sprawl; the soul being in a sort sunk in a mass of flesh and blood; but in the day of his death, the soul being divested of that body, will immediately show itself intelligent and active, a companion of angels, Heb. xii. 23; Luke xx. 36. And he that could not creep out of harm's way in his birth, will in the day of his death be able to mount upward as on eagle's wings to the highest heavens, like the bird when the stone tied to its foot is taken away, Luke xxiii. 43; for then comes the more full accomplishment of that promise, Isa. xl. 31, "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint."

2. In the day of his birth there were many little things necessary to be done about him; he behoved to be washed, and dressed, and swaddled up in clouts; laid to the breast, because he could not lay himself to it; fed, because he could not put the meat in his own mouth. In the day of his death he will need none of these things but flee away dropping his mantle of the mortal body, leaving it to his friends to dispose of it at their will.

3. In the day of his birth he knew not where he was, whither he was going, or to whom; and so he could have neither joy nor grief upon the event, till feeling the change of his condition ungrateful

to the present sense he fell a crying. In the day of death he knows very well where away he is going, and that he is going to Christ which is best of all; and so understanding the happy change, rejoiceth in it, 2 Tim. i. 12. It is true, in the way to death, through the weakness of faith, it may be dark with him; but death having done its work, all the shadows will flee away in an instant.

4. In the day of his birth he had long to wait, ere he should ripen, to be of any use for himself, for others, or for God; several days ere he should be capable to smile, weeks ere he should know his mother, months ere he could speak or go, years ere he could know any thing, but about meat and clothes; so many years in infancy, in childhood, ripening far more leisurely and slowly than young brutes; but in the day of his death he will ripen all of a sudden, he will be at his pitch of glory and happiness in an instant, as when the sun instantly breaks through a cloud, and scatters his beams all over the horizon. There is no infancy nor childhood in the other world, because there is no old age there; but as Adam was created in his perfection, at his full stature; so will the souls of the saints be advanced to their natural perfection as they drop their bodies.

5. In the day of his birth he was exposed to danger, could not miss to catch skaith if all the better care was not taken to prevent it; many a poor child has been stifled in the birth, and careless management of them after their coming into the world has had fatal effects. But in the day of his death he is set beyond the reach of danger; never a gracious soul perished in death, but as soon as the ship of the body was broken in pieces, the passengers were safe ashore; and whatever danger they are in here by Satan and his instruments, they are out of danger when on the other side of death in the other world, Rev. xxi. 25.

Lastly, In the day of his birth he was born to die, and in the day of his death he dies to live. There is a certain affinity betwixt our birth and death, so that there were never any born that did not also die, except two persons Enoch and Elias; and to make that odds even, Adam and Eve both died, that were never born. So our birth is but the preamble of death, Eccl. iii. 2. and when dying comes to an end, being born is at an end too, Luke xx. 35, 36. But there is a certain connection between the saint's death and his life, made by virtue of the death and resurrection of Christ, Eph. ii. 6. And who can doubt but it is better to die to live, than to be born to die? to put off, than to put on the clog of morality? Now in our birth we put it on, but in our death put it off. Therefore, the day of the saint's death is better than the day of his birth.

Secondly, The day of his birth clogged him with a body of sin; the day of his death sets him quite free from it, and brings him into a state morally perfect, Heb. xii. 23. There was never man born into the world except the man Christ, but he brought a body of sin with him into it, Psal. li. 5. John iii. 9. In the day of our birth, we are born with fallen Adam's own image on us; therefore it is particularly marked of Seth the father of the holy seed, Gen. v. iii. Insomuch that even those who are sanctified from the womb, are not to be excepted; for they are sanctified but in part, and still have ground for that cry, Rom. vii. 24, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" till death. But then in the day of the saint's death, that body of sin is destroyed and razed quite and clean; and therefore the day of his death is better than the day of his birth.

We may view his case in these particulars.

1. The day of his birth fixed the disease in him, he was born a sinner, Psal. li. 5. Hence it is not as accidental ailments to be removed by human art; but being owing to his birth, it is natural, not to be cured without a miracle, John ix. 32. Job xiv. 4. And coming in by his birth, according to the dispensation and settled order of grace, it is not to be quite removed but by death.

2. The day of his conversion began the cure, loosed sin at the root, though it did not root it up. Thus was the day of his new birth, better than the day of his first birth, 1 Pet. i. 23. "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever." On good grounds is this day preferred to the birth-day, Ezek. xvi. 4, 8. "As for thy nativity in the day thou wast born, thy navel was not cut, neither wast thou washed in water to supple thee; thou wast not salted at all, nor swaddled at all. Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold thy time was the time of love, and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness; yea, I sware unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord God, and thou becamest mine." Here the man mismade in his birth-day was new made; mismade after the image of fallen Adam, new made after the image of the second Adam, 2 Cor. v. 17.

3. The intervening days between the day of conversion and the dying-day, the cure is a carrying on. There is a struggle with the disease in order to its removal, which in a measure prevails, though not altogether, Gal. v. 17. And as it is better, there is something to struggle with the disease than that it should bear full sway; so these days, however troublous they are, are better than the birth-day, as it is more hopeful to be groaning on a sick bed, than to be silent in the grave.

Lastly, But the day of his death roots up the disease for good and all, and perfects the cure, leaving not the least remains of it in the soul, Heb. xii. 23. The leprosy was in the walls of the house, no scraping nor plastering would remove it, but still it broke out and spread again; but in the day of death, when the walls of the body are taken down and carried out, then there are no more vestiges of the leprosy left to remain. The seventh day of the compassing of the accursed walls of Jericho was the best day of the seven, and the seventh time that day the best time; for then the wall that had stood so long unmoved, fell all down together.

Thirdly, The day of the saint's death carries him into a better world, than the day of his birth did. The other world where Christ is, is a better world than that where we are; in the faith thereof Paul desired to die, that he might enter into it, Phil. i. 23. The day of his birth brought him into this world, a wilderness; the day of his death takes him into the other world, a Canaan, a better country, a paradise. What was the wilderness to the Israelites in comparison of the promised land? Such is this world to the saints in comparison with the other. Take a swatch of the difference.

1. The day of his birth brought him into a world of uncertainty, set him down on slippery ground; the day of his death takes him into a world of certainty, sets his feet on a rock. When he was born, whatever he was born to, he was born to uncertainties. His health, wealth, ease, yea his life itself, hung always at an uncertainty; he might have been this moment in health, but sick at heart the next. His reputation and character was at an uncertainty; while a man is on this side of the grave, his character in the world is not so established, but by some wrong step or other it may yet be blemished, that he may set in a cloud, that has shone bright. But when the man with the good name dies, he is set beyond all uncertainties more. He is so well that he can never be ill again; the kingdom he receives cannot be moved, Heb. xii. 28. However tossed his life was here, he is established there, Rev. iii. 12. Death comes up the last of the train of all his uncertainties, establishes his welfare, and seals his good name and character, as no more liable to be blemished.

2. The day of his birth brought him into a world of sin and defilement; but the day of his death brings him into a world of purity, Heb. xii. 23. From the time he was born into this world, till he dies out of it, he breathes in and out an infectious air; his own plague sores are running on him; and sees those of others running too; and wherever he is, and with whomsoever, he is in hazard of snares and defilement. But from the moment of death he

breathes the pure air of Immanuel's land, where there are no clouds nor vapours; where all diseases are healed, and no unclean thing can enter. Spotless purity reigns there; there is no hazard more of ensnarement or defilement, Rev. xxi. 25.

3. The day of his birth brought him into a world of toil and labour; but the day of his death brings him into a world of rest, Rev. xiv. 13. Much toil there is for the back and belly, and some have more of it than others. But nobody wants it altogether, no not those who go with an even-up back, Gen. iii. 19; Eccl. i. 8. They are liable to weariness as well as others, an evidence that their very pleasures, ease, and recreations are a labour. But the other world is a world of rest to the people of God, Heb. iv. 9. and of refreshing, Acts iii. 19. As God did the works of creation in the six days, and rested the seventh day, so they having improved life laboriously to the obtaining of the good name, shall there have eternal rest. They will rest from all the business this world is now throng about. There will be neither labouring the ground, nor tending cattle in the other world; nor any servile work whatsoever there. There will be no labour of the mind, nor painful study there; but as Solomon lay down and slept, and awakened a wiser man than ever one was by study; so they sleeping the sleep of death, will awake with a pitch of knowledge as far above that which they have at their best now, as the knowledge of a man is above that of a child. The toilsome and laborious duties of religion will have no place there; there will be no watching, no combat, &c. Act they will for ever, but never know weariness more; their work will be their reward, their eternal recreation.

4. The day of his birth brought him into a world of care and sorrow; but the day of his death brings him into a world of ease and joy, Matth. xxv. 21. Though a man be born to a crown, he will find himself born to cares and sorrows; for as the fairest rose wants not its prickles, so the most plentiful enjoyments of the world want not their thorny cares, sorrows, and vexations attending them. And often does the most piercing and racking vexation rise from what was taken for the spring of the greatest comfort. But death puts an end to all these in the case of the man with the good name. A drink of the well of life at death extinguishes all care and sorrow for ever, fills with joy unspeakable. Those of them that sighed most here, will sing eternally there; they will sing for ever the song of Moses and the Lamb on the other side of death, though they groaned on this side.

5. The day of his birth brought him into a world of disappointment; but the day of his death brings him into a world surmount-

ing expectation, 1 Cor. ii. 9, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." Man is born to disappointments in this world, especially good men, for whom the Lord minds better things in the other world. All worldly things are greater in expectation than in fruition.

Hence it is the young and unexperienced that have the greatest expectations from them, and fondness for them; because they are not yet cut with so many disappointments, as the aged. This holds in the very brutes, where the young ones are the most lightsome in their kind, the old being as it were cut with disappointments, and cloyed with finding the same thing over and over. But death brings the good man to heavenly things, that will be greater in the fruition than in expectation; as the queen of Sheba said to Solomon of his magnificence, 1 Kings x. 7. "Behold, the half was not told me; thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard." But a greater than Solomon will be found there. And death will bring them to a happiness in that world, that has neither brim nor bottom beyond what they could either hear or conceive.

Lastly, The day of his birth brought him into a world of death; but the day of his death takes him into a world of life, Matth. x. 30. This is a dying world we are born into, where some are still coming in, and others going out to make room for them; the children coming in as with a warning away in their hands to the parents, as their children will do to them in their turn. But in the world that death carries him to, there are no marriages, births, nor burials. There the father lives as long as the child, and there is no difference betwixt them more, both living eternally.

Fourthly, The day of his death settles him among better company, than the day of his birth did, Heb. xii. 22. and downwards. The comfort of one's being in a place depends much on the society there; unpleasant society or neighbourhood will make the most pleasant place disagreeable. Great is the difference betwixt the society the man was in, in this world, and that which death carries him to in the other world. Let us consider the odds a little,

1. The day of his birth landed him in the arms and embraces of his mother, if she died not in bringing him forth, in which case he behoved to want that kindly reception into the arms of a mother. But in the day of his death he is received into Abraham's bosom, more kindly and warmly than that of any mother, and which death never makes cold and stiff, Luke xvi. 22.

2. The day of his birth brought him into the arms of his glad father, if he was not dead before he was born; but in the day of his

death he is presented to, and received by his heavenly Father into his embraces, whose love and affection to his children is above that of earthly parents, as the heaven is above the earth. God in Christ is an affectionate Father, even love itself, 1 John iv. 16. Christ will then receive the soul he died for with a satisfaction surpassing that of the most tender mother, Is. liii. 11. and the Father of our Lord Jesus will behold it as bearing the image of his own Son, and his own image.

3. The father and mother that lovingly embraced him in the day of his birth, may yet come afterward to frown on him, beat him, be bitter against him, they having little comfort in him, or he in them; but when the day of death is once come and over, the child of God shall see no more frowns, beating, nor bitterness. His minority will then be overpast, even the discipline of the covenant, the rod will be for ever laid by. He shall be eternally indulged and comforted. Isa. lxvi. 13.

4. The day of his birth brought him at most into but a small company of brothers and sisters; perhaps he was an eldest child, or an only one; but the day of his death lands him in a numerous family, whereof each one with him calls God in Christ Father, Rev. xiv. 1. The saints are divided in many families on earth, but in heaven they make but one family, from Adam to the last saint that shall come there, Eph. iii. 15. They may look on every saint there as a brother, which will be a comfortable sight of the heavenly multitude, Rev. vi. 11.

6. Brothers and sisters afforded him perhaps but a coldrife welcome in the day of his birth, either through a defect of wit to set natural affection astir, or through ill nature, that on the score of interest made them look on him with a grudge; or however they embraced him affectionately in the day of his birth, there were not wanting animosities and heart-burnings in their after-life now and then. But in the day of his death there will be a kindly welcome from all. The parent's affection on earth, and his substance is limited to a certain measure, and the more there are to part them among, the less every one gets; but the love of God, and the treasure in heaven, is infinite and boundless, fills all to the brim, and yet they cannot exhaust it. So that if there were ten thousand more worlds of saints created, it would rather add to, than diminish from the happiness of every one that is now there. There love is perfected; and as no seeds of hatred are left within or without they will live together in eternal uninterrupted love.

6. In the day of his birth he had the welcome of a few neighbours present at the birth; in the day of his death he will have the

welcome of angels, whereof not one only, but several shall carry him into Abraham's bosom, Luke xvi. 22. with a warmer affection than any woman can receive the new born infant, as the love of angels is more glowing than our earthly love. They will carry him into an innumerable company of them, Heb. xii. 22. in whose presence there was joy at his repentance, and much more must there be at his coming home to stray no more, Luke xv. 10.

7. Whatever welcome he had in the day of his birth from neighbours or relations, the joy was but on one side; though they rejoiced in him, he could not rejoice in them, for he knew them not; but in the day of his death the joy will be mutual; he that in the day of his birth was not equal to imperfect men, will in the day of his death be equal to the angels. He will know God and Christ, the saints, and angels, and will rejoice in them, as they will rejoice in him.

Lastly, Whatever welcome he had into the world in the day of his birth, he had much uncomfortable society there in the days of his after life, that made him often see himself in his neighbourhood in the world, as in Mesech and Kedar, Psal. cxx. 5. yea dwelling among lions' dens and mountains of leopards, Cant. iv. 8. But in the day of his death he will bid an eternal farewell to all uncomfortable society, and never see more any in whom he will not be comforted to be with them.

(1.) He was born into a world, where there was a seed of the serpent to turn against him as heart enemies, whenever he turned to God, John xv. 19. His living with them, and dealing with them, wove many a snare to his soul, made him many a weary day; and often did he find deep wounds from them, Psal. lviii. 4. But he will die into a world of profound peace and love, where none of that seed can have access; a world peopled entirely with the seed of the woman, all united to Christ the head by the same Spirit, and among themselves by the firmest bands of love.

(2.) He was born into a world, where even saints had their blemishes, their faults which made their society uncomfortable, and hardly tolerable; so that he had much ado to dwell even with some in whom the grace of God dwelt. But he will die into a world, where saints have no blemish left in them, where there will be no unkindly, peevish, or touchy saints to mar the comforts of society; but all will be perfect in knowledge and love.

(3.) He was born into a world where men have their particular interests to drive, and selfishness causes them to over-drive their neighbours, over all bounds of justice, equity, and love; the greater swallowing up the lesser, till they be planted alone in the earth.

But he dies into a world, where there is no divided interest more, but all centre in the glorifying that God, who allows them all a perfect happiness in the enjoyment of him, furnishing all as the sun does this world, without withholding from one what is afforded to another.

(4.) He was born into an ensnaring world, brought into society where he received infection, and did infect again; where he was a temptation to others, and others were a temptation to him; the consideration whereof made him often weary of the world. But he dies into a world where there is no more of that: were he once past that step, he will be no more a snare to any, nor will any be a snare to him. The leaves of the tree of life are for healing, but there is no more sin nor death.

Fifthly, The day of his death brings him into a better state than the day of his birth did. As the state of glory is better than the state of this life, so is death to one who has well improved life, better than his birth. Great is the odds on the part of the day of death in this case, however advantageous the birth may be.

1. The day of his birth sets him down in a state of imperfection, natural and moral; the day of his death advances him to a state of perfection of both kinds, Heb. xii. 23. There is a natural imperfection in us in respect of our very frame, more than in the young of brutes according to their kind; a great imperfection in the necessity of meat, drink, clothing, education, and teaching; the which continues with us all our life long. A moral imperfection much more wretched, in respect of the guilt and corruption of nature we bring into the world with us; the which last also continues with us all our life, though the reigning power of it be broken.

But in the day of his death both these are done away. He arrives at a natural perfection; the soul will be perfected in all its faculties, no more darkness and confusion in its apprehension, no more error or mistake in judging, and therefore no false reasonings. There will be no need of human teaching there; every saint will be a profound philosopher, and an infallible divine, the image of God in them in knowledge of the works and will of God being brought to perfection. The dunghill-work of eating and drinking, the childish work of busking and decking, they will have no more use for. The saint arrives at a moral perfection that day, grace is perfected, the love of God planted now in the heart, and preserved as a spark of sacred fire in the midst of an ocean of corruption, will dry up that ocean; and they shall be as pure as if they had never sinned, being set beyond the possibility of sin.

2. The day of his birth brought him into a state of probation and

trial; but the day of his death brings him into a state of retribution and recompense, 2 Cor. v. 10. The day of his birth set him down on the ice, where he was to have a hit or a miss for eternity; he was brought into this world, to undergo his trials for the other world, in which most men come foul off. There he had Christ and his salvation offered him, to be embraced by faith, which was to be evidenced by steering a course of holiness maugre all opposition. But then he was baited with temptations from the devil, the world, and the flesh; he was brought on a stage of afflictions, crosses, and various hardships, to see if he could bear them for Christ. This made his life a fight, a continued scene of trial.

But in the day of his death he is taken off his trials, with the Judge's approbation, and the full reward is appointed him, and given him. The Lord Christ, who looked on all the time of his trials, observing how he carried, seeing how he got many a fall, yet rose again, then passes a merciful verdict upon him, Matt. xxv. 21, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." And then he is to fight no more, but triumph for ever; he has wrought his work, and he gets his reward of grace. The trials were perhaps long, but the retribution will be longer; the former was but temporal, the latter will be eternal.

3. The day of his birth brought him into a state of changes, but the day of his death brings him into an unalterable state, Rev. iii. 12, "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out." The state of man from his birth is like that of the moon, ever waxing or waning, never appearing with its former face; he is still lying open to ungrateful alterations, so that though he be never so well to-day, he cannot boast of to-morrow, but he is in hazard of exposing himself as rash, Prov. xxxvii. 1. But in the day of death the last change comes, and brings him into an unalterable state of happiness; he is fixed for ever in endless joy and peace. For though there be clouds to overcast in the lower, there are none in the upper regions.

Lastly, The day of the saint's death brings him to, and settles him in better exercise and employment than the day of his birth did. He will spend his eternity in the other world, better than he did his time in this world, how well soever he spent it, Rev. iv. 8, "They rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God almighty, which was, and is, and is to come." There is a great variety of men's exercises and employments here, and few or none are so exercised, but they would be content to be better: well,

the day of death will make it far better with the saints. The odds will be great.

1. He was born to earthly exercise and employment, but he dies to heavenly. When he is born, he falls a sucking his mother's breast, that is all he can do; when he dies, he falls a sucking in abundantly the divine consolations. As he grows up, he is put to learn; when he dies, he is irradiated in a moment with a light that dispels all his darkness. When he is come to years of action, he is employed in some labour of the hand, or of the mind, when he dies he is beyond all labour, but is active in the glorifying and enjoying of God, which was the great end of his creation.

2. He is born to wearisome, sorrowful, and heavy exercises; he dies to joyful, comfortable, and eternally refreshing exercise. As he was much employed in sighing here, he will be employed in singing there. Many a time he laboured in vain here, but there will be no labour in vain there; he will always reach his end, being arrived at the state of perfection.

Lastly, He was born to such exercise, as he was not able to continue with, but needed rest; and so a great part of his time was spent in doing nothing, but taking the necessary rest; but he dies to such exercise, as he shall endure with continually, needing no rest by sleep or the like, Rev. iv. 8. There is no night there, for it is not needed there.

I shall now shut up this subject, with some application of what has been said.

USE I. Of information. This shows us,

1. That whatever good things the saints have in hand, they have more in hope. If they were born to never so great things, as Solomon was to a crown, yet they die to greater things. Whatever they enjoy in this world, as men, or as Christians, they will enjoy more in the other world; their best things come last.

2. Whatever afflictions, trials, and crosses in life they have been born to, there is a time coming wherein all their losses will be made up, and their heaviest weights will be downweighed with comforts, Isa. lxvi. 13. Sometimes when the waves of trouble are overflowing, they are apt to look back on the day of their birth with a grudge, that brought them into such a troubleous sea, Job iii. 3; Jer. xx. 14, 18. But that is their infirmity, their impatience. Let them wait a little, and they will see there is a better day coming.

3. Sense is no good judge of what is best or worst. Of all things death is the most terrible to sense; therefore in the day of death there is nothing but groaning, sighing, and mourning; whereas in the day of one's birth, there is feasting and rejoicing. Yet to a

good man the day of his death is better than the day of his birth. Such is the doctrine of faith, quite opposite to that of sense. They must be ill guided then that walk by sense.

4. There must be another life besides this, and a far more happy one; otherwise the day of death that takes us away from all the comforts of this life, which the day of our birth brings us into, could not be better than the day of our birth. The day of a good man's birth ushers in a holy and happy life, though imperfect; which must certainly be better than no life at all.

Lastly, There is a way to take off the terror of death, and to make the dying-day our best day, better than the day of our birth. That matter depends on the improving of life. Our life time is our seed time for the other world, and death is the harvest; according as we live now, so will the crop be that we will have to reap then, Gal. vi. 8.

USE II. Of exhortation. 1. To saints. 2. To sinners, and all.

FIRST, Saints, whose chief business in life has been, and is, to improve life to the raising of the good name, let this serve to bring you into good terms with death. Death will not be to you, what it will be to others, the storm is changed into a calm; and it will be your best day, better than the day of your birth. And that you may know to whom this belongs, it is designed for those of a threefold character, agreeable to what was said before. This comfortable message is,

1. For you who have made it your business to obtain the favour and friendship of God, by taking hold of God's covenant of free grace, uniting with Christ the head of it, through faith; and whose main concern in life is to be found in him, Phil. iii. 8—11. Have you been awakened to see your lost state by nature, illuminated in the knowledge of Christ as the only remedy, and brought to embrace him in the free covenant as the sufficient and only way to the Father? Why truly being thus implanted in Christ, the day of your death will be better than the day of your birth.

2. Ye whose main care it is in the course of your life to please God, Col. i. 10, as a wife is to please her husband, and a servant his master, and one his friend and benefactor, 1 Pet. ii. 9. Are you so disposed, that you dare not please men, at the expense of his displeasure? Gal. i. 10. Have you renounced your own will, as to your duty, and as to your lot? Have you laid aside the pleasing of yourselves, and your own lusts, that that is no more the scope of your life, but to please God, Rom. xv. 1, 3. Is the scope of your life, to please him in doing and in bearing? And wherein ye see you have displeased him, are ye displeased with yourselves, confess, mourn

over it, apply to the blood of Christ, and long for the day when ye shall displease him no more? If so, the day of your death will be better than the day of your birth; you will be pleased for ever.

3. Ye whose business in the world is to serve your generation in real usefulness to others, as ye have access in your several stations and relations, Acts xiii. 36. Are you so disposed, as that, out of regard to the God above, you dare not be mischievous and hurtful to others, even when it is in the power of your hand? Job xxxi. 21—23. Do ye look upon uselessness for God or men in the world, with a horror; and upon yourselves but as stewards of your time, gifts, substance, opportunities of usefulness, for which we must give an account to God, and therefore lay out yourselves to improve your talents, and do good thereby? Has the warm influence of divine grace opened your shell of selfishness, wherein ye sometime lay snug, careful for nothing but your own sweet self; and brought you out with a public spirit to be useful in God's word as ye have access? with a benevolent disposition to do good to mankind? If so, the day of your death will be better than the day of your birth. And therefore I exhort you to the following duties.

First, Be mortified to life, and abate of your fondness for it. There is nothing in the world we naturally stick to more closely than life, Job ii. 4. But certainly there is a necessity of being mortified to it, to have our desires after it deadened in a regular way, Luke xiv. 26, "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother,—yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." Without question, there may be a too great eagerness for life, which is sinful in all, and most unbecoming saints.

Ques. How far should we be mortified to life?

Ans. 1. So far as not to quarrel the unalterable statute of death, Heb. ix. 27. Sin brought in death; by it mankind forfeited life. Many ills it brought into the world, but a short life in this world was really the least ill that it brought in. We see this statute was just, that it has been exactly observed from generation to generation. Our hearts should comply with it, saying, Even so be it, and should have no grudge against it. Why should the rocks be removed for us?

2. So far as not to desire, though it were at our option, to stay always in this world, Job vii. 16. That is certainly an unmortified desire of life, to wish this life were eternal to us; and a habit of it argues a graceless state. It was a profane tale of a cardinal of Paris, that he would be content to forfeit his part of the happiness of heaven, if he might live here for ever. Grace in the heart certainly mortifies men to this life; they that are born from above

will certainly desire to be above; they that are united to Christ, will certainly desire to be with him; and therefore the Christian course is a coming up out of the wilderness, where, though they must sojourn for a while, they will not desire to fix their abode, Cant. viii. 3.

So far as to be content to part with it at God's call, Luke xiv. 26. God is Lord of our life, he has set each of us in our post in life, to stand till he give order to relieve us. As we quarrelled not his setting us on the stage of life by our birth; so we should be content to come off again when he calls us by death. The time, way, and manner of our leaving it, we should leave contentedly to his disposal.

Lastly, So far as never to desire to live just for living's sake, but for the solid advantage of life. This life is such a mass of vanity, that it is not desirable for itself, but some circumstances that attend it. So we may desire to live to honour God in the world, and to be useful, Isa. xxxviii. 19. And if we should be laid by from usefulness in the way of doing, we may be content to live for usefulness in the way of suffering. But life is not to be desired stript of all manner of usefulness; for that is to make ourselves, not God, our chief end. Now to mortify you to life, consider,

(1.) The uncertainty of it; it is but a shadow, you know not how soon it may be gone; a vapour, that may vanish ere you are aware. I may say then, as Prov. xxiii. 5. "Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not?" What folly is it to let the heart too fondly out on that which in a moment one may loose, and every moment hangs at uncertainty? It is surely wisdom to sit loose to that which we are never sure of.

(2.) The unsatisfactoriness of it. Every period of life, however promising it may be at the entry on it, will leave you disappointed in your progress in it, and coming off from it, Eccl. i. 8. There is nothing in it or about it, that belongs not to the other life, wherein the heart of man can find a rest. Still the bed is shorter, stretch it as ye will, than that ye can lie on it.

(3.) The sinfulness of it. There is none liveth, and sinneth not. That indeed makes life desirable to sinners, that since they cannot part with their sins, they cannot think to part with life neither; for that then all occasion of satisfying their lusts is cut off for ever. But certainly it must mortify saints to life, that they cannot have it, but there is sinning with it, 2 Cor. v. 4. Rom. vii. 24.

(4.) The troubles of it, the many afflictions and trials that attend it. These indeed should not make us impatient to be away, like Jonah, chap. iv. 8. For they are our trials we are put upon for the

other world, which we are resolutely to bear with patience and resignation, and so discover the reality of the grace of God in us. But they may well be allowed to mortify us to this life; for that is one of the ends they are sent for, to be as gall and wormwood laid on the breast to wean us. And the wisdom of providence is to be adored in that, ordinarily towards the end of life, troubles come on thicker than they were wont, as in the case of our Saviour.

(5.) There is a better life than it abiding you in the other world, Heb. xi. 16. The faith of the palace in heaven would mortify one to the cottage of clay here; for why should they be fondly addicted to their present state, whom a better state is awaiting? It is our conversing so little with heaven that makes us so fond of the earth. Were we viewing the promised land more, with faith's prospect, we would be more disengaged from this wilderness-world.

Lastly, The state of imperfection inseparably attends this life; that there is no getting beyond the former, till ye get beyond the latter. You may struggle as you will towards perfection, and if you be real saints, you will do it, Phil. iii. 14. from an inward principle not managed by the prospect of the event; but you will never reach it, till this life be at an end. Rise up as oft as ye will, wash and watch; ye will fall again and defile yourselves, till the day of death put an end to that weary work.

Secondly, Be not frightened at death, nor afraid with any amazement, Is. xxxv. 4. To make a jest of dying argues contempt of God, and secret desperation; to be careless and unconcerned about it, a carnal security that will have a frightful awakening. To be in deep concern about it becomes all; but to be frightened and put into disorder by the view of it, is unbecoming saints. To allay that terror,

I. Consider, that in the day you embraced Christ in the covenant, you certainly did it in view of your dying, to lay down measures for eternity. Why then should ye be frightened at that which ye have been thinking of and preparing for before? Leave that to them who have been carelessly dreaming away their life time.

2. Death, though a grim messenger, is Christ's messenger of good to you, to carry you away in peace, Luke ii. 29. It is like the waggons that Joseph sent to bring Jacob into Egypt to him. And faith's ear opened, would hear the voice to the dying Christian, saying, as Gen. xlvi. 3, 4. "I am God, the God of thy father; fear not to go down into Egypt.—I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee up again." It is such a call as Peter had from Christ to come to him upon the water. And however boisterous the wind and black the water may be, there is no fear of sinking to the ground: only believe.

3. In your struggles against sin, and wrestling with temptations, have ye not sometimes looked wistly for death's relief? Rom. vii. 24; Cant. viii. 5. Have ye not comforted yourself in the prospect of cold death's drowning out those passions and lusts, that have so often taken fire again after a flood of godly sorrow going over them? Why then should you be put in a fright and disorder at the view of its approach?

4. It were inconsistent with God's honour, and the glory and dignity of Christ, to put off his friends and followers, with that kind of life he gives them here, Heb. xi. 16. One may be confirmed in this, considering 1 Cor. xv. 19, "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." Therefore of necessity all their losses must be made up in the other life. Why then should saints be angry at their blessings, and be frighted at the Lord's coming to accomplish all his promises?

5. The upper world is the world of peace and love, Abraham's bosom. There are gone thither before us our godly acquaintances, whom we once looked on as the excellent of the earth, the loss of whose society was heavy; we will get it there again. The holy angels will be loving and lovely companions. He who on earth died for us while enemies, how loving and lovely will he appear there, where we shall be perfect? God is love itself, and there his infinite love will be displayed in an inconceivable manner.

Lastly, Christ passed the ford before you, has altered the nature of the waters, Rom. viii. 34, and caused them to abate; and now he bids you follow, for that there is no fear, Cant. ii. 10, 11. Keep the eye of faith on Christ, who forded the waters of death before you, and that will be a mean to abate the terror.

Thirdly, Familiarize death to yourself, Job xvii. 13, 14. Do not keep at a distance from it in your thoughts. I would not have the terror of death rob you of the comfort of life; but it is the greatest folly for a man to wind up himself so in the comforts and amusements of life, as to debar the serious thoughts of death; and can serve no end, but to bring sudden and remediless ruin; for whether men will think of death, and prepare for it, or not; it will be in on them at length. And what we must meet with, it is best to acquaint ourselves with before. Therefore,

1. Be frequent in your taking a view of the other world, with the help of the prospect of the word, to be looked through by the eye of faith. Be often as it were getting up to the top of Pisgah, thence to view the promised land. You cannot get thither for a trial, to come back again, Job xiv. 14. but there is a map of it drawn in the Bible, by considering of which you may be brought acquainted with it.

2. Be often viewing the passage thereto. The Jordan of death runs betwixt it and this our wilderness, and by it is the passage we must all take. We will not get an essay made of it, that we may mend at one time what we marred at another; there is the more need then to look well and often to it before we enter in, which we know not how soon we may be obliged to.

Lastly, Let your hearts be habitually disposed to these views, to notice the many memorials of them that Providence has furnished. There are still some dropping off into that world, some young, some aged. What is every winter, but an emblem of death; and every spring, but an emblem of the other world and the resurrection? Yea every night is the grave of the former day, as the following day empties the grave again.

Fourthly, Raise comfortable expectations from death. View the day of death in the light wherein our text sets it, and behold it is a good day, the best day.

1. Expect it as the day that will better your condition, however heavy that is now, Ps. xvi. 9. Though ye have many heavy days in your life, partly from your own corruption, partly from the corruption of others; partly from the holy hand of God for trial, partly from the devil seeking your destruction; look to the day of death, as what will set all to rights, and bring in to you what heart can wish. The day of death to a child of God is his marriage day, Mat. xxv. the day wherein the traveller comes home from abroad to his father's house, the day wherein he is past his minority, and enters to his inheritance.

2. Expect it as the day that will establish your condition, Rev. iii. 12. Your condition is wavering and uncertain now, Psal, xxx. 6, 7. Sometimes your soul's case is prosperous, but ere you are aware it is all wrong again; sometimes washed fair and clean in the fountain, anon ye are lying in the mire again; sometimes ye have your feet on the neck of your corruptions, anon they trample you under foot; sometimes ye can raise one of the songs of Zion, anon the harps are quite out of tune, hanged on the willows. Sometimes your outward condition is smiling; but that lasts not, it turns gloomy, and troubles break in perhaps from all quarters together, the springs of your comfort run bitterness, and your worldly comforts are dried up one after another. But look forward to the day of death, as what will end all ungrateful changes.

Fifthly, Work your heart to, and entertain a regular desire of death. The day of death is certainly to a child of God an object of desire; the apostle professeth it, Phil. i. 23. "I desire to depart, and to be with Christ;" and that in the name of all the saints,

2 Cor. v. 2. "For in this we groan earnestly, desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven." And it is a piece of good preperation for death.

Ques. What is the regular desire of death?

Ans. I. For the matter of it, it lies in these three things.

(1.) A desire of it as the passage to uninterrupted communion with God in Christ, Phil. i. 25. Sometimes it ariseth from the saints' want of communion with God, which being uneasy does rightly make death desirable, as that which would make up that want, and secure against it any more for ever; sometimes from the sense of the sweetness of that communion, Cant. viii. 6. But the enjoyment of God being a part of man's chief end, death is desirable as a means to it.

(2.) A desire of it as the passage to perfection in holiness, Phil. iii. 14. Thus the man desireth it that he may be free of sin, and put beyond the possibility of sinning more, Rom. vii. 24, that he may be in capacity to serve the Lord without marring or wearying of the work. This is the main part of man's chief end, and therefore death must be desirable as a means thereto.

(3.) A desire of it as an entrance into rest. The rest of death is promised to the saints for their comfort in all their heavy and restless circumstances, Isa. lvii. 2. And therefore it must be desirable under that consideration. It is very natural for the tossed in a storm, to be desirous to be ashore, for the weary labourer to desire to have ease, and for the Christian to desire his eternal and perfect rest, Job vii. 2.

2. For the quality regulating it, it must be accompanied with entire resignation to the will of God, Matt. vi. 10. We must in our desire of it even on these accounts be resigned to the will of God.

(1.) As to the time, we must never be peremptory as to that, but wait the time prefixed of God, Job xiv. 14. He will keep us no longer in life, than he has use for us either in the way of doing or suffering; and we must be content to wait his time for our admittance into uninterrupted communion to perfection of holiness, and into rest; and to be peremptory for rest at our time, and resolved to suffer no more, while yet God dischargeth us not as devilish, and exposeth to eternal suffering, as the sentry deserting his post is deservedly put to death.

(2.) As to the way and manner. There are many ways of going out of the world, we must leave it to the Lord, which will be the way for us; whether the way of lingering sickness or sudden death, natural, or violent by the hand of man. I think, if God should refer it to us, we should refer it back to him.

SECONDLY, Sinners, and all whosoever would have the day of death better to you than the day of your birth, improve life for that end. To sum up your duty in a word, as you have already heard, (1.) Let it be your great care and concern to get the favour and friendship of God through Christ, by taking hold of God's covenant of free grace, uniting with Christ the head of it, through faith in his name. (2.) Lead your life a life to the honour of God, studying to please him in all things. Renounce your own will, and your own corrupt affections, and wholly give up yourselves to him, to be ruled by him, and governed by his laws. (3.) Live usefully for men. Lay out yourselves to promote the spiritual and temporal welfare of all ye have access to in your station. By these means, and no other way, ye will obtain the good name, by which your dying-day will be better to you than your birth-day.

CHRIST'S SPECIAL ORDER FOR GATHERING HIS SAINTS TO HIM AT THE LAST DAY; WITH THEIR DISTINGUISHING CHARACTER, AS ENTERING INTO HIS COVENANT NOW, CONSIDERED.

The substance of several Sermons preached at Ettrick, in May, 1730.

PSALM L. 5.

Gather my saints together unto me: those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice.

LOOKING forward to the other world, we will see a great gathering to come, a gathering of saints, and a gathering of sinners; what part we shall have in these, depends on the entertainment we now give to the gathering unto Christ, in the covenant; they that will not now be gathered to Christ in the bond of the covenant, will then be driven from him, and gathered with sinners into the pit; they that gather now to him in that bond, will be gathered to him in glory then. *Gather my saints together unto me: those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice.*

This psalm certainly relates to the coming of Christ for judgment, ver. 3. "Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence; a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him." But whether to his first coming, to abolish the ceremonial law, set up the simple gospel-worship, and to judge, condemn, and take vengeance on the formal superstitious Jews, de-

stroying their temple, and ruining their kingdom; or to his second coming to judge the world, is a question. I think it is plain it relates to both, the former as an emblem, pledge, and type of the other: and thus we find them stated by our Saviour himself, Matt. xxiv. Only the coming of the Judge is expressed in terms, directly and immediately looking to his second coming, as the procedure and issue in terms directly and immediately looking to his first coming. So our text falling within the former part, we have all ground to consider it as relating to the other world. In this psalm,

1. We have the party in whose name the court is called and held. It is in the name of the Holy Trinity, Heb. "God! God! Jehovah; he hath spoken," &c. God will judge the world by the man Christ.

2. The issuing out of the summons to the whole world, called the earth from the rising of the sun, unto the going down thereof; from east to west, from the one end to the other. All nations must come to it, Asian, European, African, American, Christian nations, and Jews, Mahommedan, and Pagan nations.

3. From whence the Judge sets forth, making his glorious appearance. At the giving of the law he came from Sinai with terrible majesty, Deut. xxxiii. 2. At this his appearance he will come from Zion, the city of the living God, namely, from heaven, the church being so called as a heaven on earth. Thence he will come shining in power and great glory. He comes out of Zion, because he comes as a Saviour to his own, and that now men having heard the gospel, are judged according to it.

4. His awful coming to the judgment. He is God, as well as man. Devouring fire shall be his harbinger, 2 Thess. i. 8. But will any then bid him welcome? Yes, his people will. Heb. "Let our God come; and let him not be silent," *q. d.* Come, Lord Jesus! Be not as one deaf, to the cries and sighs of thy friends, and the tumult of thine enemies. Sometime his people, doubting and fearing, trembled at the thoughts of his coming; but then they will be beyond all these, seeing the day their own.

5. Whither the summons shall be directed. To the heavens, where the souls of the blessed are that are dead; to the earth, where the living are, good and bad, and where the bodies of the dead are, under which is comprehended hell, where the souls of the wicked are, Rev. xx. 13.

6. A special gracious order in favour of his people, in the words of the text. Now comes the time of setting all to rights with them, completing their desires, and full answering of all their expectations from him.

1*st*, We have the order in itself, "Gather my saints together unto me;" wherein consider,

(1.) The parties in favour of whom it is issued out. It is the saints, holy ones, Heaven's favourites, beneficent ones that were useful in their generation. These were sometimes little regarded in this world; but then they will be the only persons that will be regarded. Christ the Judge will acknowledge them as his own, Mal. iii. 17. "They are my saints; the world disowned them, and contemned them; and I was silent, and many time seemed not to own them neither. But now I will speak out in their favour, I own them to be mine whoever are saints." Then farewell all other marks of distinction among men, rich and poor, healthy and sickly, learned or unlearned; saints and sinners is the only remaining distinction then.

(2.) What is ordered about them, "Gather them together unto ME." Gather them to me; not before me only, among themselves; such a gathering there will be of sinners there, as well as saints, Matth. xxv. 32. But gather them close to me, says Christ the Judge, that they may be where I am, sit with me on my throne, be ever with me. They have been scattered here and there in the cloudy and dark day; now gather them together, and that to me, as my members, Gen. xlix. ult.

(3.) To whom the order is directed. It is plain from the original, that it is to others than them, and to a plurality; and that as plainly shews it is to the Judge's attendants, the holy angels, Mark xiii. 27. These are they that gather the tares in bundles for the fire, and the wheat to the Master into his barn.

2*dly*, The parties to be gathered to him characterised, "Those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice." Their names not being expressed in the order, how shall they be known from others? Why, here is their distinguishing character. Christ the Judge sometime set up his standard in the world, as being an appointed head for sinners to gather to, Gen. xlix. 10. He published in the gospel sinners' welcome, and invited them to come to him in the bond of his covenant. While some slighted him and the covenant, they came into it and so were gathered to him by faith, while others staid away. Now, says Christ, all those that gathered to me, embracing the covenant offered to them in the gospel, gather them now to me, that they may receive their crown, and the benefits of that covenant in full tale. But the further explication of this part of the text shall be deferred till afterwards.

From the first clause I observe the following doctrine, viz.

Doct. When Christ comes again to put an end to this world, and complete the state of the other world, he will publicly own the saints as his own, and they shall be honourably gathered to him by his order.

In treating of this doctrine, I shall,

I. Consider the time of these great events, when this order for gathering the saints to Christ shall be given.

II. Christ's public owning the saints as his own.

III. The gathering of them to him.

IV. The order for this gathering.

V. *Lastly*, Conclude with an use of exhortation.

I. I shall consider the time of these great events, when this order for gathering the saints to Christ shall be given. It will be at his second coming, his coming to the general judgment. What number of years must run out before that, we know not; only we know that it will be, and it is drawing on. And to set the purpose of the text in due light, it is fit here to consider.

1. That Christ will certainly come again, in the character of the Judge of the world. As sure as he came the first time, and was judged, condemned, and crucified by sinners; so sure will he come the second time in power and great glory, and judge the world, Acts i. 11. "This same Jesus which is taken up from you unto heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." It is a piece of his exaltation, and reward of his sufferings, for which he has yet trusted his Father, and has not yet got: but it is impossible, by reason of the divine faithfulness, that it should fail, Phil. ii. 9, 10. "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow." It is the joint desire of the saints' wrought in them by the Spirit, that he should come, Rev. xxii. 17. "The Spirit and the bride say, Come;" to which he echoes back, ver. 20. "Surely I come quickly." And he has appointed the sacrament of the supper, not only as a memorial of his first coming, but as a pledge of his second coming, 1 Cor. xi. 26.

2. When Christ comes again, this earth will be very throng, and a wonderful mixture will be in it more than ever at any time before; he having called to heaven, and the other receptacle of departed souls, and brought them all back to their bodies which are in the earth. Then surely,

(1.) The earth will be thronger than ever, though there will be no striving then for more room in it, as now; the now strivers would then be content to be lost in the crowd. But, I say, it will then be

a thronger earth than ever. For not only will there be a generation alive on it as now, but those of all generations before them from the beginning of the world will rise up among them too. And what a throng world will that make?

(2.) There will be a wonderful mixture then in it, at a pitch there never was before. For there will be a mixture of saints and sinners in the generations then alive; and besides, all the saints and sinners of former generations will rise up among them. There will be a mixture of Pagans and Christians, Papists and Protestants, good and bad, sincere Christians, profane and formal hypocrites. For instance, in our own land, there have been generations that lived and died pagans or heathens, others that lived and died Papists besides those that have been since the Reformation. Now all these lie buried in our land, and therefore all of them must rise there. What a mixture will this make in Scotland? What a throng is in our churchyards, though there is no want of room there? but the mixture cannot be discerned; there is no discerning the difference of the dust of the body that was for fornication, and that which was for the Lord, there. But when they are raised, the mixture will be visible.

(3.) Only that will be a throng that will soon be separated, a mixture that will not last, but quickly be done away. The gathering of the saints will put an end to it, which being done by the ministry of angels, we may be sure will be quickly dispatched.

3. When Christ comes again, he will put an end to this world ere he go. His very first appearance will put an end to the business of it. All trades, employments, and diversions in this world, will be dropt that moment for ever. The shepherd will not give a cry or a look more to his sheep; nor will the ploughman make out his furrow, nor the huntsman pursue his game a step further. And ere he leave it, he will put an end to itself by setting it on fire; by the general conflagration, cities and villages, mountains and valleys will be consumed to ashes; so that it shall no more be capable of affording a habitation to man or beast; while withal the heavens that cover it shall pass away, 2 Pet. iii. 10.

Lastly, When Christ comes again, he will complete and settle for ever the state of the other world, Rev. xxi. 5. The state of this world is fitted for men's probation and trial, and is very variable; the state of the other world, of men, and affairs in it, will be quite new, suited for reward of men's deeds done in the flesh; and it will be made unalterable for ever. It is begun already in the case of separate souls, godly and wicked; but then it will be brought to a pitch—the godly made happy, the wicked miserable, completely, and settled for ever, there no more to change.

II. I proceed to consider Christ's public owning the saints as his own. At that time when Christ comes again for these great purposes, what will be the lot of believers? Why, he will own them as his saints. We may take up this in the following things.

1. Saintship will be the only mark of distinction among men then. The persons of distinction now are those descended of honourable families, the rich and wealthy, able to make a figure in a vain world, that appear in their gay clothing; they must gather by themselves now, others must know and keep their distance. But then all that kind of distinction is razed for ever, and there is an absolute levelling. The only persons of distinction remaining are the saints, to be honourably gathered to the great King, while others are all to be cast away out of his presence, as the vile trash of this world.

2. Saintship will then be declared Christ's badge. In all ages of the world, while hypocrites have falsely pretented to it, it has been the object of the ridicule of the profane, and an eyesore to both, Isa. lix. 15. Saints is a name of mockery with many; but they will see it then a name of honour. The faith that is without works of a holy tender life, whereby people pretend to be believers in Christ, but show not holiness in their life, will leave them without the mark, Rev. xiv. 1. Only a faith that sanctifies the heart and life will avail.

3. Those that have borne this badge, Christ will not forget nor misken. Though they have been long buried and out of mind in the world, he will remember them; though they have lain among the pots, under various afflictions, reproaches, and ill names, he will not misken them. He was himself once in a very low condition, but then he will appear in glory; and so shall they with them, Luke xxii. 28, 29. All the filth cast on them will then be wiped off.

4. He will own them as his before his Father and the holy angels, Rev. iii. 5. "He that overcometh, I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels." He is to bring them into his Father's house there to dwell for ever; and therefore he owns them before his Father, because they can come thither only in his right. They are to be the companions of the angels for ever, and this is their recommendation to them—they are my saints.

Lastly, The grounds of his special propriety in them shall then be opened and appear, Mal. iii. 17. "They shall be mine," *i. e.* appear to be mine, "saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels." He will own them as his Father's gift to him, his own purchase, his own conquest by his grace, his by his own consent,

participation of his Spirit, and spiritual marriage; his people, his brethren, his spouse, his own members mystical.

III. I shall next consider the gathering of them to him. This gathering,

1. Pre-supposes the resurrection of the dead saints, and the changing of those found alive. Of the ministry of the angels in these we find no mention; the voice of Christ himself raiseth the dead, John v. 28. whether the archangel that sounds the alarm, 1 Thess. iv. 16. be a created angel or not. And the changing of those alive appears to be performed in the same manner, 1 Cor, xv. 52. That they may be gathered to Christ, they are raised up out of their graves, and soul and body reunited.

2. It lies in these three things.

(1.) In severing and separating them from among the wicked. Those found alive will be found mixed with wicked ones, and those in the graves will be found lying among the wicked too. But the angels will make a separation, a cleanly separation, that they shall never mix more, Mat. xiii. 48, 49. Sometimes they sighed, and said, "Wo is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar. My soul hath long dwelt with him that hateth peace," Ps. cxx. 5, 6. But the beginning of that gathering will put a full end to that.

(2.) In bringing them together from all corners of the earth into one company, Matth. xxiv. 31. By the gospel efficacy on them, they were separated from the world in respect of their state and manner of life; and were gathered together in one spiritual bond; but in respect of their bodily presence they were still mixed with unbelievers, and at a distance from other saints. They were scattered far abroad over the face of the earth, and few places could show any considerable number of them together; but then the eastern and western saints, the northern and southern, shall all be gathered into one glorious company. The evening of the world is come, and Christ's flock is brought together.

(3.) In bringing them altogether unto Jesus Christ, in the place where he will be in the air, 1 Thess. iv. 17. Thither the Judge will come, and there will he set his throne; and where the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together. Thither will the raised and changed saints ascend to him in one glorious company, and be set on his right hand as his friends, while the wicked are left standing as criminals on his left hand on the earth. And thus the happy gathering is completed.

3. For the kind of it, this gathering will be,

(1.) A great gathering, greater than any now to be seen in this

world. It is true, the saints appear few now in comparison of others; but when the saints of all generations, in all places of the world, shall be gathered together, it must needs be a great gathering; they will be numerous like the stars of heaven, which no man can number, Gen. xv. 5. Accordingly John saw "a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stand before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands," Rev. vii. 9.

(2.) A speedy gathering, being performed by the ministry of angels which move like a flame of fire, Psal. civ. 4. The bodies of the saints will then no more be heavy and lumpish, but spiritual bodies, light, nimble, and active-like spirits, being new fashioned after the likeness of the second Adam's body. So that it must needs be soon dispatched. Yet,

(3.) An exact and accurate gathering, so as there shall neither be one goat brought away with the sheep, nor one sheep left among the goats. But all saints that ever lived from the beginning to the end of the world, shall be gathered together to Christ, and they only, without the least mixture of another sort.

(4.) A gathering never to part. The gatherings in this world, good as well as bad, continue only for a little; they soon break up and disperse; but this gathering being once assembled, shall never break up nor be dissolved, but continue through all the ages of eternity.

IV. I shall drop a word to the order for gathering them to him.

1. It speaks them his favourites, whom he has a special regard for. Now he is coming in flaming fire to take vengeance on his enemies; but as the angels were dispatched to Sodom to bring away Lot, before the overthrow of that city; so are they ordered to gather Christ's saint's to him before the final overthrow of the world, and the wicked therein. Others had common favours in life heaped on them, but now these are at an end; and the saints appear the only favourites of heaven.

2. A design to honour them before the world, as when one is by a great man called to him in the sight of others. God's people have their time of trial, and living by faith on heaven's promises; the world therefore reckons them fools, and because their course and way is opposite to theirs, they hate them and are hard on them. Now Christ comes to end the dispute, and declare and decide at length, who were the wise, who the fools; and decides it by their gathering to him, while others stand trembling before him awaiting their fearful sentence.

3. A design to complete their desires and happiness. It was

their desire to be with Christ, as best of all, and now says he, "Gather them to me." They were wearied of Mesech and Kedar; they longed for the society of saints that would be comfortable; and to be at the highest pinnacle of their happiness. This gathering them to him answers all these ends.

I shall conclude this doctrine with an use of exhortation. I exhort you,

1. To be in greatest concern of all things, to be Christ's saints now. Despise it not; if so, you will see yourselves fools at last. Neglect it not, lest ye be neglected and passed by when this gathering comes. It is better to have your name enrolled by Jesus among his saints, than by men among the great and honourable of the earth.

2. Gather to Christ now as your head, by faith. He has his Father's commission for this purpose to take out of the world lying in wickedness, a people for himself, Gen. xlix. 10, "Unto him shall the gathering of the people be." He has visited our ends of the earth for that purpose, set up his standard among us, and now we have, as we have often had, a solemn call to come in; gather then to him, as ever you would be gathered to him in the end of the world.

Lastly, Having gathered to him by faith in the bond of his covenant, publicly own him as yours, your Head, your Priest, Prophet, King, and Lord. The sacrament of the supper is appointed for that end, as a public owning ourselves to be his, before the world, angels, and men. And those that are indifferent of doing that honour to Christ, would do well to consider what expectations they have of his owning them.

We proceed now to the character of the parties to be gathered to Christ at his coming, "Those that have made a covenant with me, by sacrifice;" Heb. "Cutters off of my covenant upon a sacrifice." Their character is taken, not from worldly advantages that attended them, for these will then be perished; but from the covenant, for that will be then lasting, Isa. liv. 10. So their character is true covenanters, they that have been gathered into the bond of the covenant unto him. Where observe,

1. The covenant from which their character is taken; it is not a covenant of their own devising; nor the covenant of the first Adam; but it is Christ's covenant, "my covenant," says the Judge of the world, who gives order to the angels to gather them to him. It is the covenant the Father made with Christ as second Adam, called commonly the covenant of grace.

2. The nature of that covenant; it is a covenant upon a sacrifice

namely, the sacrifice of Christ, that expiatory sacrifice. The covenant of works was not upon a sacrifice, for God was not then offended; but this covenant being made with an offended just God, behoved to be upon a sacrifice, and could not be without it.

3. Their coming into that covenant, every one personally for himself. This is expressed by their being cutters off of it, a phrase taken from the cutting a beast asunder at parties entering into a covenant, Jer. xxxiv. 18, which had a reference to the curse of the covenant to fall on the breakers. And the cutting off of the one part, so as they were never to come together again, imported the inviolableness of the covenant, Gen. xv. 10, 18. Hence the phrase is used for entering into a covenant, the sign for the thing signified. To this their action also the words upon a sacrifice do relate, *q. d.* That cut off upon a sacrifice my covenant made upon a sacrifice. Now the sacrifice being the sacrifice of Christ, it is plain our cutting off in that case must be by laying as it were our hand on the head of the sacrifice cut off by divine justice; and so it denotes our entering into the covenant by believing on Christ. And it presupposes the offer of the covenant made to us.

From this part of the text, we observe the two following doctrines, viz.,

Doct. I. There is a covenant with God, which is Christ the second Adam's covenant, made upon the sacrifice of himself, and offered to sinners.

Doct. II. Those who now gather unto Christ, personally and sincerely entering into his covenant of grace offered to them in the gospel, while others slight him and his covenant, shall at the last day be joyfully gathered to him in the air, to receive their welcome to the kingdom of heaven, while others shall be left on the earth to receive their doom from him, to be driven to the pit.

Doct. I. There is a covenant with God, which is Christ, the second Adam's covenant, made upon the sacrifice of himself, and offered to sinners.

In discoursing from this doctrine, I shall,

I. Consider the nature of this covenant in the general.

II. Shew in what respects it is Christ's covenant.

III. Consider its being a covenant upon a sacrifice, and that of himself.

IV. Make application.

I. I shall consider the nature of this covenant in the general. It is a covenant of peace and reconciliation betwixt God and sinners, Isa. liv. 10, whereby an offended God and offended sinners may be-

come friends for ever, and they re-instated in his favour, and established therein. And hence ye may perceive, that,

1. Not the necessities of Christ the Maker of it, but of sinners whom it was made for, required it. He was infinitely happy in himself and in his Father's love, and stood in need of nothing without himself; but they needed it, and he made it for them, Cant. iii. 10. It is a covenant of grace, for his making it was an act of pure grace to us.

2. It is the new covenant, brought in to repair the ruins of mankind by the ruins of the first. God and Adam, were friends when they entered into the covenant of works; but that being broken, sinners fell under the curse; and to recover them out of that ruinous state, this covenant was made.

3. It is the covenant by which sinners may have life and salvation, Mal. ii. 5. By it all their sores may be healed. In it there is righteousness secured for the unrighteous, a pardon for the guilty, sanctification for the unholy, and eternal happiness in the other world for heirs of hell and wrath. There is as much in it as may make one easy and joyful in the face of death; hence David in his last words says, 2 Sam. xxii. 5. "Although my house be not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure; for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow."

O blessed covenant, which, by what is said, you may see is just the covenant of grace! O happy device! Do not your hearts say within you, Whom is it owing to? Whose covenant is it? Surely it never came out of our forge. Christ claims it as his. It is my covenant, says he. Therefore we shall shew,

II. In what respects it is Christ's covenant.

1. He devised it; it never bred in our breast, and never would. He was with his Father and Spirit the offended party; but the devising of the covenant of peace is not owing to the offenders, but the offended. For it was devised before the offenders were in being, Prov. vii. 29, 30, 31; 1 John iv. 19.

2. He made it with his Father without us, in all its articles and clauses, Psal. lxxxix. 3; Cant. iii. 9. The bargain was concluded from eternity between the Father and the Son, in our favour, while we were not yet any of us in being. So that the remedy for us was kindly provided, before we fell under our disease; that so it might be ready for us, and we might not die of it.

3. He was the head of it, the sole undertaker in it, on the side of sinners. There was in this covenant a burden to be undertaken for sinners, and Christ took burden on himself alone for them, to pay

their debt, and to bear their punishment; and accordingly he bare the burden alone, Isa. lxiii. 3. He gave it as his bond of suretiship for the elect, which the Father accepted, no more to look to them, but to him for satisfaction, Heb. vii. 22. The condition of it lay on him solely, viz. that he should fulfil all righteousness. Sinners could do nothing in this, but he undertook to do it, by his being born perfectly holy, living perfectly righteous, and making satisfaction by his death.

4. The promises of it were made to him, not only that of a glorious reward to himself, but of eternal life to all his, Gal. iii. 16; Tit. i. 2. As when a father covenants with a surgeon to heal his son's broken leg; the promise is made to the father, and he also pays the surgeon's fees, though the benefit redounds to the son.

5. He receives sinners into it, the administration thereof being wholly committed to him, so that coming to him by faith is our coming into the covenant, John x. 9. "I am the door; by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved." Justly is it reckoned his covenant, since the Father has left it with him, to take in whom he will into it; and none are instated in it, but by, in, and through him.

6. All the benefits of it are in his hand. They are now purchased by him, and the Father has lodged them with him, intrusted him with them all from the least to the greatest, Matth. xi. 27. So that he has the dispensing of them all; if the sinner would have the pardon of the covenant, he must go to Christ for it; if he would have the sanctifying influences of the covenant, he must apply to Christ for them, for he is our Joseph, who has all the stores of grace and glory in his hand.

7. *Lastly*, It is in his right alone that sinners can get the benefits of it, or claim them, Phil. iii. 9. They can claim them no otherwise than as they are his members, his spouse, his children. Hence at the last day, when they are to get the complete enjoyment of the covenant-benefits all together, the order is given by him, "Gather them to me;" *q. d.* for they cannot go into heaven, but at my back; they cannot have the benefits but as they are in me, Rom. v. 17.

III. I come to consider this covenant's being a covenant upon a sacrifice, and that of himself. And here consider,

1. Why this covenant behoved to be upon a sacrifice.

2. Why on the sacrifice of Christ himself.

3. The import of its being a covenant on a sacrifice.

First, Consider, why this covenant behoved to be upon a sacrifice. The reason is, the honour of God injured by man's sin required, that if there was to be another covenant for life and salvation to man now a sinner, it behoved to proceed on a sacrifice making atonement

for the breach of the first by sin. Man could not break the first covenant unpunished, else where were the honour of the holiness, justice, and law of God, Isa. xlii. 21. Rom. iii. 25.? Therefore is that caution added, Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7. "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty." At the proposal of a covenant of peace for sinners, justice stands up and pleads, There shall be no peace unless I be satisfied, Heb. ix. 22; therefore a sacrifice is provided, that the covenant of peace may upon it go on, and the broken first covenant is ingrossed in the second, that all it demands shall be answered.

Secondly, But why is it a covenant on the sacrifice of Christ himself! The reason is, because no other sacrifice could avail in the case, Heb. x. 5, "Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared me." One can hardly think, that if the covenant could have been made on a less costly sacrifice, that the only begotten Son of God would have been made the sacrifice, John iii. 16. There was a necessity for Christ's death, if sinners were to have life, Luke xxiv. 26.

1. The Levitical sacrifice of beasts could never avail in this case. For they were not of equal value with the guilty heads, beasts being in value far below men. Therefore by them indeed the debt might be acknowledged, and the way of paying it typified; but not paid.

2. Men could not be sacrifices for themselves in this case to procure a covenant of peace; for if once the sacrificing knife had come to their throat, they would never have recovered; if they had been once laid on the altar, they would have been consuming but never have sent forth a savour of rest to incensed justice.

3. Angels could not have been a sacrifice; for neither could they have ever overcome the weight of wrath that was due, but would have sunk under it. And their sufferings not being of infinite value, could not have been accepted for recompense of the wrong done to an infinite God. Wherefore Christ only could be a sacrifice to procure the covenant of peace. For,

(1.) He only could bear the curse, and overcome it. The curse of the first covenant behoved to be executed, in order to the establishing of the second for peace to sinners; and he only could bear it, so as to bear it out, and bear it off, Gen. xv. 10, 17, 18. Gal. iii. 13. The wicked in the other world will bear the curse indeed for themselves, and so will be made sacrifices for themselves, according to that, Psal. xciv. ult. "He shall bring upon them their own iniquity, and shall cut them off in their own wickedness;

yea, the Lord our God shall cut them off." But they will never be able to drink this cup up, and overcome it; so they shall have no peace for ever.

(2.) He only was of infinite dignity, and so his sufferings only could equal the offence of an infinite God by the sins of the world. Christ's sacrifice was of "a sweet smelling savour unto God," Eph. v. 2. It is an Old Testament expression used, Gen. viii. 21, "The Lord smelled a sweet savour," Heb. a savour of full rest, namely, "quieting his Spirit," as the expression is, Zech. vi. 8. The sins of the elect world, most abominable to God, sent up as it were a most rank smell into his nostrils: no sufferings of the creature could master it, but the sufferings of Christ did it fully.

Thirdly, Let us consider the import of this covenant's being a covenant on a sacrifice.

1. This says, that wrath is appeased, justice has got satisfaction for sin; the bar which the broken first covenant laid in the way of sinners' peace with God, is removed; for the new covenant is made on a sacrifice, whereby atonement is made for the breach of the first covenant, and justice has got of the Surety, for the sinner, what it could demand, 2. Cor v. ult.

2. It is consistent with the honour of God, to take sinners into this covenant, and receive them into favour as his confederates; for now the holiness, justice, and truth of God, have the wrong done them repaired by this sacrifice; and his mercy and grace have a free vent thereby, Psal. lxix. 4.

3. Sinners have free access into it. Solomon observes, Prov. xviii. 16. "A man's gift maketh room for him, and bringeth him before great men." And what will Christ's gift of himself as a sacrifice not do? Surely now the sinner may come forward under the covert of that precious blood; the sword that guarded the tree of life was sheathed in the sacrifice of Christ, and laid by, Cant. ii. 10, 11.

4. There is a feast for them, a feast on the sacrifice, the parties covenanting feasting together. Upon the covenant made betwixt Jacob and Laban there was a feast kept, Gen. xxxi. 54. So upon this covenant made on the sacrifice of Christ, there is a feast, 1 Cor. v. 7, 8. "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast." The flesh and blood of Christ crucified is meat indeed and drink indeed, and we are to feed and feast thereon by faith.

Lastly, It is a sure covenant, as made on that sacrifice, the virtue and efficacy whereof being eternal, one can never be shaken out of it. The mercy and grace of God to sinners have a sure foundation

here, Psal. lxxxix. 14. "Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne; mercy and truth shall go before thy face." What can shake a sinner out of this covenant when he is once really in it? Nothing can be supposed to do it but sin. But then it is a covenant on a sacrifice whereby sin is expiated, and therefore it cannot have that malignant effect. Accordingly the promise of the covenant runs, Jer. xxxii. 40. "I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me."

I shall now make some improvement of this doctrine.

1. Then see how Christ loved us! When the Jews saw Christ come weeping to Lazarus's grave, they said, "Behold how he loved him!" John xi. 36. How much more may we say so, when we consider him making a covenant with his Father for the salvation of lost sinners of mankind, and that on the sacrifice of himself? It was much that he took any notice of our just ruin, being enemies to him as well as to his Father; more than he made a covenant for our recovery; most of all, that in order to establish it, he made his soul an offering for sin, and consented to shed his precious blood for it.

2. Then let us take this his covenant, and rest in it, as made by him. Let us leave to him the glory.

(2.) Of sole Maker of it with his Father, Zech. vi. 13. Let us not pretend to frame, make, and devise a covenant of our own, distinct from his, in our accepting of it. Let us not quarrel his covenant, nor go about to model it anew, agreeable to our corrupt minds. Let us make no exceptions against it, no exception in favour of any beloved lust, no exception against any of the duties of the covenant, nor against the discipline thereof, which is the cross. Let us desire nothing out that he has put in, nor anything in that he has left out, Acts ix. 6. "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" So sincere covenanters look upon it as well ordered in all things, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.

(2.) Of sole undertaker in it. He was so when it was made, and when it was fulfilled, Isa. lxiii. 3. "I have trodden the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with me." Let none now then put in for a share in the undertaking. Some, in their pretended covenanting with God, undertake for their part, that if God will save them for Christ's sake from hell and wrath, they will be good servants to God as long as they live, and keep his commands, and so do their part; and so they would share the glory with Christ, Rom. iv. 4. They consider not that they are without strength, and

can do nothing; that they have as much need of the grace of Christ to sanctify, as to justify them. But come ye to Christ in his covenant, to get your nature changed, the power of sin broken, and to be caused by him to walk in new obedience.

(3.) Of the sole immediate right to the promises of it, Gal. iii. 16. You are welcome to claim the promises, according to your need; but ye must claim them only in his right, and be content to come in at his back to get them made out to you. This has been the way of the saints, as Daniel, chap. ix. 17, 18. and Paul, Phil. iii. 9. There is no standing of a sinner before God, but under the covert of the Mediator's blood; and no plea for sinners, but in his name.

And to move you hereto, to acquiesce in the covenant as his, leaving him the glory, consider,

(1.) It is best for us as he has made it, Eccl. iii. 14. If we should offer to mend it, by adding to or taking away anything from it, we would be sure to mar it. Infinite wisdom knew best what was for our good, and infinite love set him on it. As Christ saw better than we, what was our true interest; for he loved us more than we loved ourselves, for he loved us infinitely, Eph. iii. 19.

(2.) Only he is able enough for that undertaking, Psal. lxxxix. 19. And the work can be put in no other hand, but it will be marred. Why should we desire to take burden on ourselves, when he is content to be the great Burden-bearer, to bear our weight, and all the weights that hang at us, whether of duty, guilt, or affliction? He is sure, and can never stumble under our weight, nor fall; but we are ready to fall at every turn, Psal. lv. 22; Isa. xlii. 4.

(3.) The promise is sure in his right, and the claim that way cannot miss, Ps. lxxxix. 33. When pleading the benefit of the promise, we consider ourselves, we see nothing but guilt, sinfulness, unworthiness, sickliness, and inconstancy, to cut off our hopes: but looking to Christ, we see perfect holiness and righteousness, infinite dignity and excellency; so that we may say, "Lord, I am unworthy, yet my Saviour Christ is worthy for whom thou shouldest do this for me."

Lastly, Let poor trembling sinners be encouraged to come into this covenant, since it is a covenant on a sacrifice. It is an awful thought for a sensible guilty creature to enter into a covenant with a holy jealous God. Our God is a consuming fire; how then can we stand before him, and not be consumed? The sacrifice being interposed we are safe, Christ going between mediating the peace with his atoning blood, wrath is turned away, and the sinner received into favour and friendship. I proceed now to,

Doct. II. Those who now gather unto Christ, personally and sincerely entering into his covenant of grace offered to them in the gospel, while others slight him and his covenant, shall at the last day be joyfully gathered to him in the air, to receive their welcome to the kingdom of heaven, while others shall be left on the earth to receive their doom from him, to be driven to the pit.

In discoursing from this doctrine, I shall,

I. Premise some things on this point in the general.

II. Consider sinners' sincere personal entering into Christ's covenant of grace now, that will secure their joyful gathering to him at the last day.

III. *Lastly*, Make improvement.

I. I shall premise some things on this point in the general.

1. All mankind were by Adam's fall separated and scattered from God, as sheep gone astray, 1 Pet. ii. ult. Mankind was at first joined to God in the bond of the first covenant, and so they were his family about his hand, headed by him, and enjoying his favour. But by sin they broke away from him, and being gone from him the centre of unity, they were separated in affection one from another, Tit. iii. 3. And in this state they remain while out of Christ, scattered and wandering on the mountains of vanity.

2. To bring scattered sinners to God again, Christ was appointed the head to whom their gathering should be, 1 Pet. ii. ult. "For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls." Chap. iii. 18. "Christ hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." The first Adam was the head under whom they went away, and he left them wandering, a ready prey for the devourer; the second Adam is the head for their return, by whom they may be brought back unto God, and put up in safety with him for ever, John xi. 52. He is the great Shepherd, intrusted by his Father for gathering the strays of mankind, into one stock and fold.

3. There is a double gathering of scattered sinners to Christ The one is now a doing, has been from the beginning, and will be to the end of the world; and that is a gathering of sinners by the gospel to him into the bond of the covenant of grace, Gen. xlix. 10. The other is to come certainly at the world's end, and that is a gathering of them by the angels to meet him in the air, never to set their foot more on the cursed earth, but to go away with him to heaven. And that will be a gathering quickly dispatched, as appears from the text.

4. There are many who will not be gathered to Christ now, what-

ever pains he is at to gather them, Mat. xxiii. 37.—"How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" He sets up his standard among them, he calls to them to come to him; but they get away from him. They love better to wander on, than to return; they prefer a vain world, and their deceitful lusts, to Christ; and they love rather to be at their liberty, than to be brought into the bond of his covenant. They cannot endure to be so hedged up, Ps. ii. 3. So they refuse to gather to him.

5. Yet there are still some who with heart and good will gather to him, and willingly come into the bond of his covenant. Efficacious grace makes them willing, Ps. cx. 3. They are weary of their distance from God, and their wandering life, seeing how in that case they are exposed to the utmost danger, and are in no safety from the roaring lion, who goes about seeking whom he may devour; and so they willingly gather to Christ, and come into the bond of his covenant, as their only safety.

Lastly, At the end of the world, whatever separation there is between these parties now, the wanderers and those within the bond of the covenant, there will be a greater then. The wanderers and the gathered being both raised out of their graves at the sound of the last trumpet; all those gathered within the bond of the covenant, shall be gathered together to Christ in the air, to go with him, and be ever with the Lord; and the wanderers will be brought together on the earth before him, receive their dreadful sentence to depart from him; and then they going away, the earth will be set on fire.

I shall consider sinners' sincere personal entering into Christ's covenant of grace now, that will secure their joyful gathering to him at the last day. And here three things are to be distinguished.

1. The proposal of the covenant.

2. The sinner's entering into it in a saving manner, so as to secure his gathering to Christ at the last day.

3. The profession and declaration of that entering into it, by some fit sign.

First, The proposal of the covenant. It must be proposed to us, before we can enter into it; and so it is indeed proposed to us to be entered into.

First, Consider how it can be proposed or offered to us. The covenant of grace being determined to be Christ's covenant, made and concluded from eternity betwixt his Father and him, and its conditions perfectly fulfilled already by Christ, and all its promises made to him; it is a difficulty with some, how that covenant already concluded can be proposed or offered to us to be entered into. But,

1. Suppose one in a town makes a bargain with the master in his own name, and the name of his neighbours there, fulfils the condition, and the benefit only remains to be received; and all this is done without advising with them, or their knowledge of it; may not that man when he comes home offer that covenant to his neighbours, and they enter into it just by acquiescing in it? If any of them will not, it will not be forced on them; but if they acquiesce and accept it is as good and valid as if they had been at the making of it. So it is in this case.

2. Adam's covenant was also made without us in the name of mankind, and broken too while we were not; yet by our very descending from him by natural generation, we are personally instated in it to our condemnation; and this without waiting our acquiescing or consent to that covenant. How much more may the second Adam's covenant be offered to us, and we instated in it to our salvation, by our express approbation and acceptance?

Secondly, Consider how it is actually proposed and offered to us. It is proposed and offered to us in the gospel, by Jesus Christ in his own and his Father's name; therefore he is called, "the Messenger of the covenant," Mal. iii. 1. who came from heaven, and proclaims and offers the covenant to sinners. Now it is offered to us in the gospel.

1. At large, in its several articles and clauses, both the conditionary part as fulfilled, Rom. i. 17. and the promissory part to be fulfilled, Heb. viii. 10, 11, 12. Ezek. xxxvi. 25. and downwards, and so the rest of it promises to be found through the whole Bible. All are proposed and offered under the name of the covenant at large, Isa. lx. 3. "Here and your soul shall live, and I will make an everlasting covenant with you," which takes in all the promises.

2. In compend, in the offer of Christ himself the head of the covenant. Say not, How shall we take up the covenant that such a large and ample transaction, and withal the parts thereof scattered through the whole Bible! It is set before you abridged, *viz.* in Jesus Christ, to be taken up with one glance of your eye, Isa. xlix. 8. "I will give thee for a covenant of the people." The offer of Christ to you is the offer of the covenant; even as if a father who has made a beneficial bargain for his family, should offer to adopt you; that offer of himself for a father to you, would be the offer of that bargain. Now you have this offer of the covenant.

(1.) Under Christ's hand in his written word, which ye have in the scripture. A wise man will make no offer in writing to one, but what he minds to perform; his hand-writing will bind him, if it is accepted. And may not the offer of the covenant made you in writ-

ing, under the hand of the great God our Saviour, satisfy you in that point? Take heed then, lest when "God has written to you the great things of his law, ye count them as a strange thing," Hos. viii. 12.

(2.) By public proclamation in his name, by the voice of the ministers of the gospel, his criers appointed for that effect, Prov. ix. 3. If a prince proclaims an offer of indemnity to rebel-subjects, may not that satisfy them as to the reality of the offer! And should not this offer actually proclaimed to you sinners, in the gospel, by Christ's ambassadors, fully satisfy you as to the reality thereof? *Object.* Ministers are but fallible men. *Answ.* True; but their commission is infallible; and so far as they stick by that, which they do in offering the covenant to sinners, you have an infallible ground of faith in what they say. And as the crier's voice in a proclamation is in effect the king's, so is theirs in this case. Hence the apostle says, Heb. xii. 25. "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh; for if they escaped not who refuseth him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven." And says our Lord, Luke x. 16. "He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me; and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me."

Thirdly, To whom it is offered? Christ's covenant of grace is offered to sinners of mankind indefinitely; that is, it is offered to them, and any of them whosoever without distinction. So the offer stands in the written word, and so the ministerial offer is to be made. This is clear from many testimonies, Prov. viii. 4. "Unto you, O men, I call, and my voice is to the sons of men," Mark xvi. 15. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." John iii. 16. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Isa. lv. 1. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat, yea come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price." Rev. xxii. 17. "Whosoever will let him take of the water of life freely." Therefore it is offered to you, and every one of you, and you are warranted to enter into it.

Object. But it may be I was not elected, and Christ did not represent me in that covenant. *Ans.* Your warrant to enter into Christ's covenant does not at all depend on your election, or non-election, but on the revealed will of God making a real offer of it to you, Deut. xxix. ult. and that you have, and that you believe it not, you disbelieve the gospel, Isa. liii 1. make God a liar, 1 John v. 10. and so must perish, Mark xvi. 16. Where do you find that ever a person's election was the ground of his believing or entering into the covenant?

It is not revealed to the elect to bring them to believe in Christ; but they first believe, and then by that means they see they were elected.

Moreover, the promises are proposed indefinitely. So was the first promise, Gen iii. 15. "I will put enmity between thee and the woman and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." So are other promises of the covenant, Isa. lv. 3. "Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live, and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David." Heb. viii. 10, 11, 12. "I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people. And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for all shall know me from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26, 27. "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you, and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them." Where is there any limitation or distinction of persons there?

Object. The conditional promises are indeed to all, but not the absolute ones. *Ans.* There is a connection of duty and privilege in some promises; but I know no promises properly conditional, but to Christ, who has fulfilled the conditions of them already; Rom. iv. 4, 5. "Now to him that worketh, is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." The promises of the covenant, call them as ye will, are to all indefinitely; for *non est distinguendum ubi lex non distinguit.* Therefore the apostle lays it for a ground of faith to the murderers of the Lord of glory, Acts ii. 38. 39. "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."

Inst. If these promises be to all, then they must be fulfilled to all. *Ans.* That is false; according to the apostle's reasoning, Heb. iv. 1. "Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it." It follows indeed that that must be fulfilled to all who accept them

by believing; and so they shall, John iii. 26. But not to them who will not accept them, believe, nor apply them to themselves. No promise binds the promiser, if it is not accepted by the party. It is no imputation on God's faithfulness, that they are not fulfilled to unbelievers of them.

SECONDLY, The next thing is the sinner's entering into the covenant in a saving manner, so as to secure his gathering to Christ at the last day. This the text expresseth by "cutting off his covenant on a sacrifice," that is, by cutting off the sacrifice to enter into the covenant. And this being the sacrifice of Christ himself, can be no other but the laying the hand on the head of the sacrifice which then was to be cut off by divine justice. And this in gospel language is just believing on Jesus Christ sacrificed for us. So it is by believing on Christ crucified, that we are personally and savingly entered into the covenant.

It is agreeable to the nature of the covenant, that this should be the way of entering into it. For whereas the covenant is not made with us immediately, as parties, contractors for ourselves, in which case we would enter into it by promising to do something on our part as the condition thereof; but mediately through Jesus, who mediated therein as a representative, undertook the fulfilling the condition thereof, and had the promises thereof made to him; it is evident there can be no way of our personal entering into it in a saving manner, but by uniting with him, which the scripture determines to be by faith alone, Eph. iii. 17. "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." Accordingly it is determined, John x. 9. "I am the door; by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved."

Now this believing on Christ crucified or sacrificed for us, whereby we are entered into the covenant, formally lies in three things.

1. Believing the absolute sufficiency of the sacrifice of Christ for the salvation of sinners, and, your salvation in particular, and the complete security of the covenant for that effect to all within the bond of it, Jer. iii. 22, 23. "Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings; behold, we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God. Truly in vain is salvation hoped for from the hills, and from the multitude of mountains; truly in the Lord our God is the salvation of Israel." The soul seeing the infinite ill that is in sin, as an offence and abomination to an infinite God, must see also the infinite dignity of the sacrifice of Christ, arising from the infinite dignity of his person, ere it can believe this; and must also see the immoveable faithfulness of God, as the ground of believing the complete security of the covenant.

2. Believing that this covenant, in the condition thereof fulfilled

by Christ's sacrifice of himself, and the promises thereof made thereupon and bearing salvation, is offered really and truly to you in particular, by Jesus Christ, with the good will of his Father; so that it is lawful for you to come forward into it, and use it as your own. This is the report of the gospel, Isa. lv. 3, cited above, 1 John v. 11, "This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." And it is demonstrated by the Spirit inwardly to the elect, whereby they see the door of the covenant open to them, Isa. liii. 1; and whoso believeth it not, can never enter into the covenant, but make God a liar by their unbelief of it.

3. Trusting on the sacrifice of Christ for your salvation from sin and wrath, upon the ground of God's faithfulness in the covenant, Acts xv. 11, "We believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved." The soul renounceth all confidence in itself, or in any other, and relies wholly on the sacrifice of Christ, the fulfilled condition of the covenant, for the promises of the covenant being fulfilled to itself, because God has so engaged in his proclaimed covenant, and he cannot but be faithful in his covenant.

Thus the soul is formally entered into the covenant, receiving Christ in his priestly office, and so uniting with him.

And this necessarily brings along with it the covenanter's,

1. Receiving Christ as his Prophet, renouncing his own wisdom and the wisdom of the world, giving up himself to be guided by his word and Spirit, Matth. xvi. 24; Acts xiii. 22. Uniting with him, he must needs be our head for direction and guidance.

2. Receiving him as his King and Lord, renouncing the dominion of sin, the devil, and the world, and wholly giving up himself to be ruled by him as his head for government, Psal. ii. ult.; Isa. xxvi. 13.

And thus the soul entering into the covenant, taking Christ in all his offices, takes God in Christ for his God, and gives up himself to be one of his people for ever, consenting to the offer made, Heb. viii. 10, "I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people." Whoso thus enters into the covenant now, shall be joyfully gathered to him at the last day, as those that have entered into his covenant on a sacrifice.

THIRDLY, The last thing on this head is the profession and declaration of that entering into Christ's covenant, by some fit sign. This is a solemn declared entering into the covenant, in which one may be either sincere or hypocritical, Deut. xxix. 10, 12, "Ye stand this day all of you before the Lord your God;—that thou shouldst enter into evenant with the Lord thy God, and into his oath, which the Lord thy God maketh with thee this day." And so it will not

of itself, if it be separate from the former, secure our gathering to him at the last day. Meanwhile it is a duty required of us now for God's honour, and requisite for our comfort, Deut. xxvi. 17. It is done three ways.

1. By words spoken, Psal. xvi. 2, either in prayer to God, wherein a person solemnly and in express words declares unto God in secret his acceptance of and entering into the covenant; or before men, where the thing being proposed by one, others signify their acquiescing by some fit gesture, or bowing of the head, Exod. iv. 30, 31.

2. By writing under their hand, declaring their accepting of the covenant, Isa. xliv. 5, "One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and sirname himself by the name of Israel." This has been an useful practice of many in their life, and comfortable to their relations when they were gone, when they found their written acceptance of God's covenant of grace.

3. By instituted significant actions. Such is the partaking of the Lord's table. The very taking of the bread and wine at the Lord's table, and eating and drinking the same, being a solemn declaration before the world, angels, and men, that we enter into Christ's covenant. So in case it be separate from believing, though it cannot savingly enter us, we will be treated as covenant-breakers.

USE. To conclude, I beseech you by your gathering together to Christ at the last day, that you now gather to him in his covenant. For this cause I recommend to your consideration,

1. That this is a special gathering time, wherein the great trumpet of the gospel is sounding, and double sounding, a gathering; a time wherein the Lord is sending out the angels of the churches, ministers, to gather you. Let not the trumpet of the gospel sound in vain for you, nor the angels of the churches attempt in vain to gather you. They bring Christ's voice and the offer of the covenant to you.

2. As sure as the trumpet of the gospel is sounding now in your ears, and the angels of the churches are at work to gather you to Christ now, whose attempts you may render vain; so sure will the last trumpet sound in the same ears, and the angels of heaven gather them joyfully to Christ who now come unto him, to meet him in the air, while they will leave the rest on the earth.

3. What will you think to see at that day, others taken as within the bond of the covenant, and yourselves left as without it? With what pale faces, and trembling hearts, will ye look up to the Judge coming in the clouds of heaven, and to your neighbours, Christ's co-

venant people, carried by angels, and flying above you, away to meet the Lord in the air, with a shining glory on them?

Lastly, How will ye brook your last sight of them, when they having in the first place received their welcome to their kingdom from the Judge on the throne, ye shall get your sentence to depart from him into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels; and so must turn your backs, and make away to your place, they being then the spectators of your begun misery, and your beloved world being set on fire?

Think on these things in time, and whatever ye are, or have been, know that you are allowed free access into the covenant; and therefore enter into it sincerely. Go alone by yourselves, think on your lost state by nature, examine yourselves as to your liking of the covenant, and if you find your heart pleased with it, go to your knees, and solemnly declare before God, you accepting and entering into it, taking Christ in all his offices, and God in Christ for your God and portion for ever. And so be persuaded, that on this your gathering to Christ in the bond of his covenant now, depends your being gathered to him in glory at the last day.

THE SAINT'S LIFETIME IN THIS WORLD A NIGHT-TIME; THEIR EXPECTATION OF THE DAY'S BREAKING IN THE OTHER WORLD, AND THE SHADOWS FLEEING AWAY; AND THEIR GREAT CONCERN FOR CHRIST'S PRESENCE TILL THAT HAPPY SEASON COME.

The substance of several Sermons preached at Ettrick, in the year 1730.

Song ii. 17.

Until the day break, and the shadows flee away; turn, my Beloved, and be thou like a roe, or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether.

In these words you have the breathing of a gracious soul, with respect to the time that may pass in this world, before one comes to enter into the other world; it is to have his countenance and the communications of his grace by the way, until they come there, where there will be nothing to intercept it. And it would be a good sign of meeting with a kindly reception from Christ into that world at last, that we were now saying from the heart, "Until the day break, and the shadows flee away; turn, my Beloved, and be

thou like a roe, or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether." Where observe,

1. The connection of these words with the preceding verse, whereby they appear to be the breathing of a soul really married to Christ, having a sense of the marriage bond, and not ashamed of it, but resolutely owning it. "My Beloved is mine, and I am his.—Until the day break, and the shadows flee away; turn, my Beloved," &c. The spouse of Christ looks on herself as one that is married to a husband whom she dearly loves, but is not yet ready to take her home; she desires therefore, that until the time come of his taking her home, he will not be a stranger to her, but give her the comfort of his presence with her, that the present situation will allow; thereby intimating, that she is not to look for the comfort of her life from any other, but him, whether he be absent from her or present with her.

2. The words themselves: in which consider,

1*st*, The happy term that Christ's spouse lives in expectation of, which is expressed by two things, the latter consequential on the former, the "breaking of the day," and the "fleeing away of the shadows." By the day here is meant the day of eternity, that will break in the other world, in the light of glory arising to those that are married to Christ here. That is *the* or *that* day by way of eminency, 2 Tim. i. 18. This implies two things.

(1.) That she looked on her lifetime in this world as a night-time; else why should she have expected the day breaking? and that in that night-time there were many shadows, darkening things to her, and allowing her but obscure views of them; else why should she expect their fleeing away? as one travelling by night, in a mountainous or woody country, if the night were never so clear, it is no wise comparable to broad daylight; and besides there are many dark and gloomy steps caused by the shadows that the hills and woods cast; which though they amount not to a total darkness, yet the light by their means is but a very faint one. Such is the believer's travelling through this to the other world.

(2.) That she believed and expected, that that night would not last, and that the shadows would vanish at length. She looks for the breaking, Heb. blowing of the day, because however dead a calm there may be through the night, ordinarily at break of day a gale of wind rises; and that break or blowing of the day will quickly chase away all the shadows, that they shall not be to be seen more. That blowing will be of the Spirit of Christ, in a full communication of influences to the believer, at the day's breaking to him in the other world; whereby all the shadows now intercepting the light from him, will in a moment evanish.

2dly, The great thing her soul desires, and she breathes after, till that happy term come.—It is communion with Christ her Lord and Husband, in such sort and measure as the state of this life by divine regulation will allow. She is not for turning back to, and solacing herself with her former lovers, till her Husband take her home; no, being married to him, her eyes are shut now on all others, and they are towards him alone. "Turn, my Beloved, and be thou like a roe, or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether." It consists of two parts.

(1.) A desire of his countenance towards her, "Turn, my Beloved," &c. Heb. "Come round about it." It intimates, [1.] His turning his back on her, shewing some sign of dipleasure with her; the frequent lot of God's children in this world. [2.] That even in that case her heart was upon him as her beloved, and her eyes going after him, that she would have him turn his face. [3.] That she would fain have his countenance again when lost: *q. d.* Turn about to me, that I may behold thee with joy.

(2.) A desire of nearness to him, and the embraces of his love: "Be thou like a roe, or a young heart," &c. Come to me speedily. She lays not the stress of the speedy meeting on her motion to him; but as of free grace, on his motion to her; by his grace coming over mountains betwixt them, and that speedily; even as a roe comes to its mate, or a young hart to its dam, upon the mountains of Bether, 2 Sam. ii. 29. The word signifies a half part.

From the text thus explained, may be deduced the three following points of doctrine, viz.

Doct. I. A soul once truly married to Christ, will from thenceforth look on the lifetime in this world, as a night-time, a shadowy one, as indeed it is.

Doct. II. To those that are truly married to Christ, the day will break in the other world, and the shadows flee away; and they should live in the constant expectation of it.

Doct. III. It will be the great concern of those married to Christ during their night-journey in this world, that he may turn and come to them, till the day-breaking and the shadows fleeing away, they get to him in the other world.

I shall speak to each of these in order.

Doct I. A soul once truly married to Christ, will from thenceforth look on the lifetime in this world, as a night-time, a shadowy one, as indeed it is.

In touching a little on this doctrine, I shall,

I. Shew in what respect the saint's lifetime in this world is a night-time.

II. How the soul once married to Christ comes to look on its lifetime in this world as a night-time.

III. On what grounds such a soul justly looks on it as a night-time, a shadowy one.

IV. Improve the point.

I. In what respect the saint's lifetime in this world is a night-time. To clear this, consider,

1. The life of a child of God in this world, from the moment of the marriage with Christ, is a day-time, in comparison with the time he lived in his natural state, 1 Thess. v. 5. Therefore says the apostle, Eph. v. 8. "Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord." While they are in their natural state, they are in midnight darkness, it is black and dark night with them. But being united to Christ, the night of their natural state is at an end, and the day of grace is come with them. And this is such a day, as will never be succeeded by another night.

2. But in comparison with his state in the other world, it is but a night-time. When he enters there, a day of glory shall break to him, that will so far surpass all he has seen, that he shall be made to think, he never saw day before, Rom. xiii. 12. The natural man is in black and dark night, and the saints in this world are in a cloudy moon-light night; only the saints in the other world are in broad day-light, Col. i. 12.

II. We shall consider how the soul once married to Christ comes to look on its lifetime in this world as a night-time. There are four things concur to it.

1. They then have some new and precious light, however faint, that they had not before. They can say with the blind man cured by Christ, John ix. 25. "One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see." They see that in sin, Christ, and in the other world, that they did not before perceive. Strangers to Christ are like blind men, to whom the night and the day are alike; but being once married to Christ they are like him who said, "I see men as trees walking," Mark viii. 24. They see, but find they do not see clearly, and so conclude, that it is night with them.

2. Being once married to Christ indeed, the sun of the world sets upon them. The world's love to them is turned to hatred, it conceives an antipathy against them, John xv. 19. And looks as when the darkness of the night follows the lightsome day, and sits down on the beautiful cities, the green hills, the pleasant meadows and gardens, all these lose their lustre and beauty, and become black and gloomy;

so when once a soul is married to Christ, the world loseth its former beauty to the man; it is quite another thing in his eyes than it was before; the vain world is turned out of its gaudy day-dress, into its night-dress, where its former beautiful appearance is gone, Gal. ix. 14.—"The world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

3. Yet the son of righteousness is still hid to their eye sight, however he lets out some rays of light to them, and they discern him by faith, 1 Pet. i. 8. In some northern parts belonging to this kingdom, the body of the sun, about this time of the year, does indeed go out of their sight about the middle of the night; yet still certain rays appear all along; so it is with the believer. Therefore he must look on it it as night; though it is but a short one. That Jesus to whom they are joined in spiritual marriage, is gone to heaven, and there he abides hid from their eyes, though manifest to their faith, Cant. iv. 6. As Jacob married to Leah, got not a broad view of her till the morning; so the believing soul married to Christ, will not get a broad view of its Husband, till the day of eternity break.

4. *Lastly*, The beauty of the light let into them natively causes a longing for the perfection of it, Phil. iii. 13, 14. As one with a dim light discerning a beautiful object, presently calls for a clear light whereby to discern it fully; so the soul that has seen as much of Christ's excellency; as to engage the heart to him, longs for a full sight of his glory; and while the light will not serve that purpose, it natively concludes, that it is night still.

III. I shall next shew on what grounds they justly look on it as a night-time, a shadowy one.

1. They justly look on it as a night-time. For,

(1.) It is a time of much darkness with them, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. darkness of ignorance, and of uncomfortableness. However vain men may pride themselves in the knowledge they have reached, puffed up therewith as empty bladders; serious Christians will still be bewailing their ignorance and weakness in the divine mysteries, Psal. lxxiii. 22. Prov. xxx. 2, 3. And however lightsome a life the native vanity of mind may make some; it is not possible, but the imperfections, infirmities, and struggles attending the Christian life here, must make much uncomfortableness in it, Psal. xcvii. 11. How then can they but count it night?

(2.) It is a time, wherein the wild beasts are got out of their dens ranging about, Psal. civ. 20, 21. In the darkness of this life, what howling and yelling of the infernal crew, the devils and wicked men acted by them, do reach the Christian's ears and make his heart to shiver? So that to travel through the world is often as unpleasant, as through an howling wilderness in the night. And not only so,

but they are often in hazard of being devoured by them, and swallowed up, 1 Pet. v. 8. No wonder they long for day-brake, when these wild beasts will go into their dens and be silenced, Psal. civ. 22.

(3.) It is a time inclining to sleep and inactivity, 1 Thess. v. 7. All the unregenerate world is fast asleep about them, and will not awake; and they themselves have a constant struggle to hold up their head. If it were day with them, they could bestir themselves, and apply to their proper business; but it is night, and with difficulty they watch one hour.

2. They justly look on it as a shadowy night.

(1.) Because there are many things intercepting the light from them; by such means shadows are made in the night, as when a house or a hill intercepts the light of the moon or stars by night. Thus it is with God's people in the world; there are many things to mar the light of their Lord's countenance shining on them, Isa. xlix. 2; Psal. xxx. 7. And by means of these interposing hindrances, they cannot have now that light of knowledge and comfort, that they would desire.

(2.) It is a time wherein they had some precious light, yet but faint, and mixed with much darkness. Where there is no light at all, there cannot be shadows, all is but one shadow; and so it is with natural men, "there is no light in them," Isa. viii. 20. But souls married to Christ have the light of grace, which however is but a dim and mixed one in comparison of the light of glory, 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

(3.) It is a time, wherein the very means of their light and knowledge give but small and dark representations of the knowledge of the other world, and the riches of his kingdom. So does the shadow of a house in the night represent it but very darkly and imperfectly; so the shadow of a man by a looking-glass is but an imperfect representation of the man, not comparable to seeing face to face. Thus we have a shadow of Christ in the gospel, in the word, in the sacraments; but it is but a shadowy darkly representing him and the happiness of his kingdom, 2 Cor. iii. 18. So that the half is not seen. But as one taken with a beautiful picture, natively longs to see the original; so does a sight of Christ by these shadows, cause one to long for the day breaking and the shadows fleeing away, that they may see him face to face.

We shall now make some improvement of this point, in the following uses.

USE I. Of information. Is the time of this life indeed a night, a shadowy one, to those married to Christ, and do they look on it so? Then,

1. They to whom this life in this world makes such a pleasant day, that they desire no better, are in bad case. If it is so with you habitually, ye are not truly married to Christ, Cant. viii. 5. Ye are yet in your natural blindness, that night and day are alike to you; and the day of grace is not yet risen on you. And if it be so with you only occasionally, you may be sure that while it is so, your souls are out of frame, and the grace of God in you is under a cloud.

2. Then the time of this life is a dangerous time, even to those that are espoused to Christ, and they have no need to watch, "every man having his sword upon his thigh, because of fear in the night," Cant. iii. 8. They are in danger of sins, snares, and temptations; for it is a time wherein the roaring lion is ranging about, who will be bound down in his den, if once the day were broken. This made the apostle jealous over the Corinthians "with godly jealousy; for I have espoused you to one husband," says he, "that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." But I fear lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtility, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ, 2 Cor. xi. 2, 3. They are in danger of various troubles, which are incident to them in this night-season. But it is but to watch a while, if the day were broke, the danger is over.

3. The Christian's life in this world is a lonely and wearisome life; for the travellers to Zion have a night of it, a shadowy one. If one travel by day, he will readily get company, for then every body is astir; and this makes the way to destruction a throng way, the carnal world going at ease in it, because the sun of this world is up on them, and their night is coming in the other world. But if one travels by night, he will readily have a lonely journey of it; and therefore there are but few in the way to life. So it is told us, Matth. vii. 14. "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." Micah therefore laments the loneliness of it with him, Micah vii. 1. "Wo is me, for I am as when they have gathered the summer-fruits, as the grape-gleanings of the vintage; there is no cluster to eat," and the Psalmist, Psal. cii. 6, 7. "I am like a pelican of the wilderness; I am like an owl of the desert. I watch, and am as a sparrow alone upon the house-top." For it is night with them; but in the other world the day will break to them. This makes it wearisome travelling. It is so ordered, as the march through the wilderness for their trial.

There is a fourfold allowable weariness in the Christian life, which our Lord will not be displeased with in his people, that it make them often to propose that question, Isa. xxi. 11. "Watchman, what of the night?"

(1.) Wearying of an ill world, a world lying in wickedness, Psal. cxx. 5. "Wo is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar." Surely God himself is weary of them, of their obstinate impenitency, carnality, profanity, and formality, Isa. lxv. 2,—5; and i. 14. It is but kindly that his people weary of their society, who thus weary their God; and that they long for the day when they will be by themselves.

(2.) Wearying of an ill heart, the body of sin and death, Rom. vii. 24. "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!" God has left it in them for their exercise and trial, as he did the Canaanites in the land; but surely they are to make no league with it, but to war against it; and it is acceptable to him to weary and long for the day that they will be rid of it. And there is never a weary look they give for it, but he kindly noticeth it.

(3.) Wearying to be at home in Immanuel's land, where there is no more night, but an eternal day, 2 Cor. v. 4. "For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened; not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life." Rom. viii. 23. "And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." Indeed the Lord makes their travelling in this world difficult to his people, for that very end, that they may long to be home.

(4.) Wearying for our Lord's gracious visits to their souls, while they are abroad, Psal. cxxx. 6. "My soul waiteth for the Lord, more than they that watch for the morning; I say, more than they that watch for the morning." How passionately does the spouse cry for them in the text? It is a sign it is very ill with the Christian, when his Lord is away, and he cares not; when his communion with God is stopt, and yet he is at ease, Cant. v. 3. See Psal. xxx. 7.

4. That a Christian's life in this world has many ups and downs in it, is not at all strange; nay, nor that the alteration comes very suddenly; for he is travelling in a night, a shadowy night. There is nothing more stable than a Christian's state, but nothing more alterable than his frame, Ps. lxxxix. 36, 37. He may be going on cheerfully in the moonshine, singing his song in the night; anon he enters some black and shadowy valley in his way, or a cloud overcasts, and strikes a damp on him; he gets through the valley, the cloud passes off, and he recovers; and so one after another, till the day break, and the shadows flee away.

USE II. Hereby ye may try, whether ye are truly married to

Christ, or not? If it is so, ye will look on your life in this world henceforth as a night-time. And,

1. Your former value for this world will be sunk, and your love to it turned into a holy contempt and neglect of it, in comparison with Christ your husband, and his kingdom in the other world, Matth. xiii. 46. The blackness of the night will be sitten down on it, in its most gaudy dress, of profits, pleasures, and honours in it, 1 John ii. 15. You will look on it as a shadow, hiding much of the Bridegroom's glory from you; and so will keep up a struggle against it, as that which getting in betwixt the Sun of righteousness and you, will cause an eclipse of the light of his countenance.

2. Your esteem of Christ will be raised above all, 1 Pet. ii. 7. Your love to him will be a superlative love, above all persons and things, Luke xiv. 26. She that without consideration runs into a marriage with a man, is ready to discover something in him afterwards, that makes her despise him, and, when it is out of time, to prefer some other of her suitors; so they that are rash and indeliberate in their pretended closing with Christ, that were never blessed with a saving discovery of him to their souls by the Spirit, will be ready to rue the match, and to return to the flesh pots of Egypt. But the soul once truly married to Christ, will find him a covering of its eyes; they will charge their eyes henceforth to be closed on all his rivals, as never to see another so fair, Psal. lxxiii. 25. "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee."

Lastly, Ye will count it day only in the other world, however bright the sunshine in this world may be; "Until the day break, and the shadows flee away," &c. Therefore your main concern will be to reach eternal light there, Phil. iii. 14. to be prepared and made meet for it, Rev. xix. 7. And you will aim at the purity of it, 1 John iii. 3. So you will be going through this world, as in a night journey, with the eye fixed on the other world before, desiring and expecting the break of day that will be there.

USE III. Of caution. This gives a watchword to all that profess their soul's marriage with Christ. It is night-time; therefore,

1. Beware ye fall not asleep, 1 Thess. v. 7. Take heed of carnal security, which is the bed of the devil's making for us; a dangerous bed, how soft soever; and the softer the more dangerous. Satan got David into it, and there he polluted himself with adultery and murder; and Peter also, where he defiled himself with denying his Lord and Master. But it is but few that get the cast of grace to raise and cleanse them in such a case, that these two eminent saints got. People are ready to fall asleep after a full meal, Cant. v. 1, 5,

and wise virgins may be overtaken with sleep, as well as foolish virgins, Mat. xxv. 5.

2. Beware ye fall not a-dreaming. The whole life of some is one continued dream or delusion, which they awake not out of till they are past hope and help, Is. xliv. 20. He feedeth on ashes; a deceived heart hath turned him aside, and he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, "Is there not a lie in my right hand?" Chap. xxix. 8. God's children also are in hazard of dreaming too in this their night-time, when they fall asleep. David fell a-dreaming of golden mountains in this world, Ps. xxx. 6. Peter of perfect safety, when Satan was laying a snare for him and seeking to winnow him. O Sirs, open your eyes, stand on your watch, know ye are here among the lions' dens, and the mountains of the leopards. Do not dream of world's ease, but lay your account with trials; nor of safety from snares, but lay you account with temptations.

3. Beware of mistakes and misapprehensions of things, to which people are liable in the night. Live by faith, and trust not your own understanding, Prov. iii. 5. Judge not of things in your way by sense, but by the rule of God's word. Our eyes in the night are apt to deceive us. A step will appear much more difficult by reason of the darkness, then really it is; so there will be stones of difficulty appearing in the way, of a duty not to be rolled away, which, yet when ye come up to, will be found rolled away to your hand. A bush will appear a house to the traveller, and disappoint him turning to it for shelter; so does this and the other created comfort to us in this night-journey. In the night we are ready to take our friends for our foes, as did the disciples on the sea; so we are apt to do with our crosses and trials.

4. Beware of stumbling, John xi. 10. and walk circumspectly, Eph. v. 15. Keep up a holy jealousy over yourselves, Prov. xxviii. 14. "Happy is the man that feareth alway." Where the darkness of the night trysts with snares and stumbling blocks in one's way, it is hard for one to keep his feet; so it is in your way to heaven. Peter found a snare in the mount, as well as in the high-priest's hall; and Lot in the cave with his own children, as well as in Sodom. Take then that caution, 1 Cor. x. 12. "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall."

Lastly, Beware of wearying in a way of languishing, fretfulness, and impatience; the which is incident to people in the night not asleep. Whatever be your troubles in the world, yea your struggles with the body of sin and temptations do not weary so as to fall a languishing, unfitting yourselves for bearing and doing; so as to fret and be impatient, and say, it will never be day. For though it is night, the morning cometh.

USE ult. Evidence yourselves truly married to Christ, by your looking on the time of this life, as a night-time, a shadowy one. And this,

1. By stretching your view habitually beyond it," looking not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen," 2 Cor. iv. ult. A soul married to Christ will not terminate its desires and expectations within the narrow limits of time; nor would they, if it were in their offer, sit down contented with this life perpetuated, more than they would be content of an eternal night here that would never have a day, Job vii. 16. "I loathe it, I would not live alway." But live ye in expectation of this night's passing, and of the morning's coming in the other world.

2. By watchfulness and circumspect walking, as not insensible of your hazard. Travellers by night look well to their feet, however carelessly men walk that travel by day, Prov. iv. 26. Many professing to be espoused to Christ, discover their hypocrisy by the looseness and carelessness of their after-walk.

3. By continual eying and use-making of the pillar of fire that gives light in the night in this wilderness. Christ is that pillar of fire, that enlightens the believer's darkness in this world; as he is a husband, he is the soul's guide. Keep the eye of faith on him, while the night lasts, that all your motions, removes, and rests may be directed by him, Col. ii. 6. "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him." John viii. 12. "I am the light of the world; he that followeth me, shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

Lastly, By learning and using the song in the night. Our Lord has allowed the travellers to Zion, such a song, as may refresh and cheer them in their night-journey through the wilderness, Isa. xxx. 29. "Ye shall have a song as in the night, when a holy solemnity is kept, and gladness of heart, as when one goeth with a pipe to come into the mountain of the Lord, to the mighty One of Israel." They learn it out of their bible, Psal. cxix. 54. "Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage." They sing it by faith, believing the promises, and crediting and applying the blessed report concerning the other world, the day's breaking and the shadows fleeing away. And this cheers them in the melancholy night they have. Slight it not, Job xxxv. 10. "But none saith, Where is God my Maker, who giveth songs in the night?" Isa. lxiv. 5." Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness, those that remember thee in thy ways." Neh. viii. 10. "The joy of the Lord is your strength."

Doct. II. To those that are truly married to Christ, the day will break in the other world, and the shadows flee away; and they should live in the comfortable expectation of it.

In handling this point, I shall,

I. Consider the day's breaking, and the shadows fleeing away thereupon.

II. Believers living in the comfortable expectation of the day's breaking to them in the other world, and the shadows fleeing away thereupon.

III. *Lastly*, Apply the doctrine.

I. I shall consider the day's breaking, and the shadows fleeing away thereupon. And on this head I shall speak of,

1. The day's breaking in the other world to those that are married to Christ.

2. The shadows upon this breaking of the day, fleeing away.

3. Confirm the point, that the day will break, and the shadows flee away, as to those that are married to Christ.

FIRST, I am to speak of the day's breaking in the other world to those that are married to Christ. And here I shall show,

1. What a day will break to them there.

2. How this day will break to them there.

First, I shall shew what a day will break in the other world to those who are married to Christ.

1. A clear and bright day, Isa. lx. 1, 2. "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee." Whatever gloomy, dark and melancholy times the spouse of Christ has here, she will have a bright day of it in the other world. There will be no clouds in it; the dark and cloudy day will then be at an end. The glory of God lightens the upper hemisphere there, whither they go; and in him there is no darkness at all.

2. A fair day and calm. There are no storms nor tempests, no blustering winds nor rains in Immanuel's land, Rev. xxi. 4. "There shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain." It will be one continued tempest in the lower part of the other world; there the great rain of his strength will be falling continually on his adversaries; but there will be an absolute calm there, as Ex. ix. 24—26. where we are told, "There was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous, such as there was none like it in all the land of Egypt, since it became a

nation.—Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel were, was there no hail." O what a pity is it, that the faith thereof should not make us bear better the clouds returning after the rain now!

3. A glad and joyful day, Psal. cxxvi. 5. "They that sow in tears, shall reap in joy." Their wo days will then be at an end, Rev. xxi. 4. The light and gladness now under the clod, will be fairly sprung up to them then. It will be the day of the heir of glory's home-coming from his travels in the foreign land, unto his own country, his Father's house, and his Father's embraces. It will be the spouse of Christ's marriage-day, when the marriage with the spiritual bridegroom shall be joyfully solemnized.

Lastly, An eternal day. Some places of our world have a long day, but they have a night too, and that a long one. But there will be an everlasting day in Immanuel's land, Rev. xxi. 25. There is a night too in the other world, as well as a day; but they are in different regions, and never change. It will be a day in the upper hemisphere, an eternal day; and night in the lower, an eternal night.

SECONDLY, Let us next see how this day will break there to those who are married to Christ.

1. As coming near their night-journey's end, they enter the passage betwixt the two worlds, the darkness and shadowiness of the night will come to a pitch. For as the darkest hour ordinarily goes before day-break, so is it here, the hour of death is so in a signal manner, "the valley of the shadow of death," Psal. xxiii. 4. When they go down to that valley, there is a gloominess there which they have not had the like of before; they may have much ado to keep their heart from failing, because of the black and dismal aspect. But their Lord and Husband will not leave them, but guide them through it, ib. and xlviii. ult.

2. As soon as they are got over to the other side, immediately the day breaks, and it is fair day-light to them. Then the welcome day ariseth, never to go down; their hearts are cheered, their eyes enlightened, and there is no fear of stumbling any more.

(1.) A heavenly gale ariseth, such as never before blew on them; they get a full measure of the Spirit of Christ, which in a moment brings them to a state of perfection, Heb. xii. 23. This is that blowing of the day in the text. The Spirit blows upon them here, and conveys grace from Christ to them, excites and strengthens it, Cant. iv. 16. But then he blows on them so as to perfect it.

(2.) The light of glory appears, and spreads over all to them, Is. lx. 1. The shinning ones receive them, to carry them home to

Abraham's bosom. While they pass into the upper regions, the day then is broken, and goes on to the perfect day there, growing more and more lightsome, and filling them with new and unseen delights.

(3.) Getting in to the highest heavens, the Sun of righteousness is up on them; and there they are in inconceivable light and splendour, which we can have no notion of, but what is childish, Col. i. 12. There shines the glory of God, and of the Lamb; and such is the splendour, that there is no need of the sun nor of the moon.

SECONDLY, I proceed to consider the shadows, upon this breaking of the day, fleeing away. And here I shall shew,

1. What is that fleeing away of the shadows.

2. What are the shadows that will flee away, when that day breaks.

FIRST, I shall shew what is that fleeing away of the shadows. We may take it up in three things.

1. The utter removal of every thing interposing betwixt God and them, and intercepting the light of his countenance, Rev. xxi. 3. Now there are many things of that nature; but when the day breaks, there shall be none of them. The day of grace breaking, removed all interposing hindrances in respect of their state of peace and friendship; but the day of glory breaking, will remove all interposing hinderances in respect of their full enjoyment.

2. The removal of all dark, gloomy, and melancholy things out of their condition, Mat. xxv. 23. They shall then put off their blacks, and be clothed in white raiment; no sigh will be heard more, nor the least vestige remain of a sorrowful spirit. There shall be nothing from without them, nor within them, to cause the least downlook. After all the frights they have been in, they shall be perfectly composed, and enjoy an inconceivable serenity.

3. The removal of all imperfection of light, and whatsoever gives but a faint and shadowy representation of Christ and the glories of the other world, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. Rev. xxii. 4. By nature we are blind, and cannot see them, though they are to be seen in the looking-glass of the gospel. The day of grace breaking to a man, he beholds them in the glass; but in the day of glory the glass is removed, and he sees face to face. There fleeing away imports,

(1.) The suddenness of their removal. Though the moment before the shadows were at their longest, blackest, and darkest pitch, the next moment they shall be gone. As if the sun should in a moment break from under a cloud, and enlighten all that was dark before.

(2.) The completeness of their removal; they shall evanish, without leaving any mark behind them, where they had been. So does

a shadow flee away turning to nothing. The light of glory extinguishes them quite.

Secondly, We are to enquire, what are the shadows that will flee away when that day breaks. They may be comprehended under the folowing particulars.

1. The shadow of this world will then flee away, 1 Cor. vii. 31. The night comes on by the interposing of the earth betwixt us and the sun; and this cursed earth getting in betwixt Christ the sun of righteousness and us, makes a black and dark shadow, it hides the the face of the lovely Jesus from natural men wholly, as the sun is hidden in the night; from the saints it hides his face in great measure, as a cloud interposing betwixt us and the sun, so making them sometimes go mourning without the sun.

But the day of eternity breaking, the believer will see it fled away. At death they will go from it, they will be quite above it, it will be under their feet. It will not be able to cast any more shadow to them, than a hill in a sunny day when one is on the top of it, whatever it may do to those below in the valley. And at the resurrection, the world itself will flee away, being suddenly destroyed, Rev. xx. 11. It was often taken for a substantial good, but then it will flee away as a shadow, 1 John ii. 17. "The world passeth away, and the lusts thereof."

2. The shadow of sin, Heb. xii. 23. The sun shone fair and bright on mankind in the state of innocency, and made this a pleasant world, the very suburbs of heaven, where every thing smiled on man and his condition was altogether lightsome; but no sooner had sin entered, but the darkness of the night was spread over all in one shadow. The day of grace dawning in conversion, a new light arises, sin being removed in its guilt of eternal wrath, and its dominion; but alas! it still remains in its indwelling power, occasioning a continual struggle, ofttimes prevailing; hence are many long and black shadows in the believer's way, extending as far as it reaches, so that, by reason of guilt and defilement contracted, they often find themselves as in the shadow of death, Isa. lix. 2. They keep right a while, and then they walk in the light of the Lord's countenance; they are overtaken again with sin, and then they are under a cloud again, and walk in darkness.

But the day breaking, sin will flee away. There will be no more unbelief, ill heart, or corruption of nature; though it is fixed now with bonds of iron and brass, these will in a moment give way like tow touched with fire; and sin will pass away, leaving no mark behind it, more than a shadow. The believer's wounds will all be healed, and all his now running sores, so as there shall not appear the least scar where they were.

3. The shadow of temptations, Rom. xvi. 20. "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." This was the first shadow that was in the world. The command, promise, and threatening were shining clear to our first parents; but in came the subtile serpent with his temptations, which cast a shadow over them that darkened them all to Eve, so that they appeared to her in other colours, Gen. iii. 6. She carried the temptation to Adam, and he also was overshadowed ere he was aware, and he sinned, and then the shadow spread over all the world. Now the light of the word shines, and represents sin as ugly and destructive; temptation arises, and with its shadow mars the light, and sin appears lovely and beneficial. Thus the believer is often by this means left in the dark, robbed and spoiled; and takes poison to himself with his own hands, being blinded with the shadow of temptation.

But when the day breaks, that shadow will flee away. The tempter who got into the earthly paradise, will have no access into the heavenly. All the mist he raised before the eyes of believers here, will be suddenly dispelled, and never gather again more; but there they will have an eternal sunshine, where every thing will appear in its native colours; and they shall not be capable of being deceived any more. There will be no more need of watching, fighting, &c., the hazard being over.

3. The shadow of outward troubles will flee away, of troubles on your bodies, relations, names, affairs, &c., Job iii. 17. Sometimes the sun of prosperity shines on the believer, and there is silence as it were half an hour; anon trouble ariseth, spreads and continues, till it cast such a shadow, as hides prosperity quite out of his sight, and causes him to forget it, Lam. iii. 17; yea, as hides the face of God from him, that he cannot behold his countenance with joy, his weak eyes being unable so to master the shadow as to behold it. Things appear frightful in it, that believers are apt to think he has forgot them, Isa. xlix. 14. that he treats them as his enemies, Job xiii. 24. and can hardly think that they have any more room with him, Job ix. 16, 17.

But when the day breaks and the shadows flee away, they will have a profound peace, an eternal calm, in Immanuel's land. Though the storm blow never so long and hard on them, in this their night; when once the day is broken and Christ has them home, he will never let an air blow on them more. They may then look back on the tossed and troublous life they have had, but they will remember them all as waters that fail.

5. The shadow of inward spiritual troubles, through desertions, and hidings of the Lord's face. These are sometimes so black and

gloomy, that they are apt to cry out, that their hope is perished from the Lord. Such a damp may seize them, as that they begin to think that all they have had, has been but delusions; and they may be at razing foundations. They may have much ado to keep up hope, saying as Psal. lxxvii. 7, 8, 9. "Will the Lord cast off for ever? and will he be favourable no more? Is his mercy clean gone for ever? doth his promise fail for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies?" Their spirits may be wounded, the arrows of God sticking in them. Then it is dark night.

But if the day were broken, and the shadows fled away, they will be comforted fully with the greatest tenderness, when brought into Abraham's bosom, Isa. lxvi. 13. "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you; and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem." And readily they that have had the sharpest conflicts, will have the greatest comfort; sure, bitter entertainment here, will make sweet sauce to the entertainment there.

6. The shadow of ordinances will flee away, Rev. xxi. 23. "And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." The word and sacraments give but faint representations of the Bridegroom's glory, they show him but as it were in his night dress; they are but the looking-glass wherein they see his shadow, 2 Cor. iii. ult. Though they show more glory in him than in the whole creation, yet the half is not discovered thereby.

But when the day breaks, and the shadows flee away, they will get an immediate sight of him, as he is, 1 John iii. 2, see him face to face, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. The ordinances that served them in their night-travelling through the wilderness, will be honourably laid aside when the day is broken to them in the promised land, as was the tabernacle when the temple was reared up. There will be no need of the lower table, when they are set down with the King at the higher. So preaching, prayers, sacraments, &c. shall flee away.

7. *Lastly*, The shadow of all manner of imperfections, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. There are many imperfections attending the believer here, natural and moral. He must eat, drink, sleep, &c. for his body; his soul is compassed about with many spiritual infirmities, there is a weakness in all his faculties. These cast a broad shadow, and hide much of the King's glory to him.

But when the day breaks and the shadows flee away, the body shall no more be a clog to him; all the faculties of his soul shall be brought to their perfection. The mind shall arrive at a perfection

of knowledge, the will of conformity to the will of God, and the affections of regularity and order. Their enjoyment of God shall be full; they shall be put off no more with sips and tastes, but drink of the rivers of his pleasures for evermore. Faith shall be turned to sight, and desire and hope into full and unhampered possession.

THIRDLY, I shall now confirm this point, That the day will break and the shadows flee away, as to those who are married to Christ. Consider for this purpose the following things,

1. It was so with their Head and Husband, and the procedure with them must be conformable to that with him, Heb. xii. 2. "Jesus, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." 2 Tim. ii. 11, 12. "It is a faithful saying, For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him; if we suffer we shall also reign with him." Our Lord Christ had a dark shadowy night of it in this world; the sun of this world's prosperity hid itself from him all along, and the farther on in the night it was with him, it grew still the darker, till it came to the utmost pitch in the valley of the shadow of death. And then the day brake to him, and all shadows fled away; and now he is for ever in the light.

2. The nature of God's work of grace in them; it cannot be left unperfected; Psal. cxxxviii. ult. "The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me." Time was when they were in a state of blindness, no light being in them, Isa. viii. 20. God has brought them out of that state, and there is a light arisen to them, a light of grace, the nature of which is to go on to perfection, Prov. iv. 18. "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." Grace and corruption are like the house of David and Saul; struggle they may for a while, but the latter must be extinct, and the former enjoy all.

3. The bounty and goodness of God to his people. God is essentially good, and he is good to them in Christ his Son. It is inconsistent with the goodness of his nature to keep them always in the darkness of the night, and horror of shadows. Surely, looking to his good and gracious nature, we may conclude that the day will break and the shadows flee away, especially considering, that there is a longing for it in them created by his own Spirit.

4. *Lastly*, The nature of the covenant, which is everlasting, and cannot be broken. It secures by promise the perfecting of the happiness of his people; it was made for that end; the promises are not accomplished here perfectly; nay it is an earnest only of their accomplishment that is given. Therefore there must be a time, when the day shall break, and the shadows flee away.

II. I proceed to consider believers living in the comfortable expectation of the day's breaking to them in the other world and the shadows fleeing away. It implies these following things,

1. Their looking on themselves as travellers only through this world, who are not to stay in it, Heb. xi. 13. As soon as the soul is married to Christ, it begins to be a pilgrim on earth, in its own account, reckoning heaven the home, and earth the house of its pilgrimage. Men in their natural state are like the Egyptians in their darkness, who moved not from their place; but being touched with converting grace, they are like the Israelites travelling through the wilderness to Canaan.

2. Their laying their account with the continuance of the night and gloomy shades, while they are here. Our Lord has told them, that it must be so, John xvi. ult. "In the world ye shall have tribulation;" and though sometimes they fall a dreaming of light and ease, Psal. xxx. 6. yet their habitual course is not so, being persuaded that "they must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God," Acts xiv. 22. They are resolved to trust their portion, and rest till they come to the other side, and, in the mean time, to bear their trials till they are safely arrived there.

3. A contentedness to leave this world, and go to the other, Luke ii. 29. "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word." Every body sincerely joining themselves to the Lord Christ as their Head and Husband, are thus contented, Cant. viii. 5. They may indeed have a natural horror of death, but they are reconciled to the pleasant land on the other side of it; as one is unto health, while yet they have a horror of the bitter potion, whereby it must be compassed. Sometimes again they are unclear as to their interest, and this may make them unwilling to remove; but this is consistent with that contentedness, since it makes not an absolute unwillingness, but only in such circumstances; as one may be willing to go to a place, yet not willing to take the journey blindfolded.

4. A faith of the day, the clear and bright day that is in the other world, Heb. ix. 13. "Those all died in faith." The report of it is no more to them as idle tales, but they are persuaded of it, and look on it as the land of light and comfort; as far preferable to this world as the day is to night. If they were not persuaded of the other's being a better world than this, they could not be content to part with this for it.

5. A desire to be there in the other world, where the day breaks and the shadows flee away, Phil. i. 23. "I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far

better." As it is natural for the walking traveller to desire the breaking of the day, and to be there where it is daylight; so it is natural for the walking Christian, to desire to be there where it is eternal day in the other world. And this desire is at the root of the believer's desire of a total deliverance from sin, and of a full uninterrupted communion with God; these they desire, and these they know are not to be reached, but in the other world.

6. A hope and expectation of the day's breaking to them there, and the shadows fleeing away, Rom. viii. 23, 24. "And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. For we are saved by hope." There is a lively hope of the glory to be revealed, so that they hope, however dark it is for the time, it will not be always so; the morning will come. Hope has its struggles as well as faith; but the hope of believers is never totally overthrown, more than their faith.

Lastly, A comforting themselves in this world with the prospect of the other world, 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18. "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen, are temporal; but the things which are not seen, are eternal." If the night be gloomy here, they should comfort themselves with the prospect of the day's breaking there, and the shadows fleeing away, and sing in the house of their pilgrimage, in hope of the joy abiding them at the end of their journey.

I shall now make some practical improvement of this doctrine.

USE I. Of information. This informs us,

1. That whatever be the trials of believers in this world, there is a happy state abiding them in the other world, wherein they will be beyond them all, Heb. iv. 9. "Their remaineth a rest to the people of God." The wicked may have a fair and calm day here, but there will be an everlasting night for them there. But it is better to have our night here, and an eternal day there, than to have our day here, and eternal night there.

2. The report of unbelief to the people of God in their dark hours, whereby it is said to them, It will never be better, is false, and not to be credited, Lam. iii. 17, 18. It is the work of faith to contradict these evil surmisings tending to cut off hope; and to believe the promise, when one does not see. Satan ruined the world at first by working a misbelief of the threatening; now he carries it on by a misbelief of the promise.

3. This is the time wherein we are called to walk by faith, 2 Cor.

v. 7. In the other world we will walk by sight, for there the day will be broken, and there will be no shadows to interpose; but till we come there, we must be content to live by faith, trusting our good things to come after we have patiently received our evil things, and made our way through the gloomy shades here.

4. That there will be a vast difference betwixt the state of believers here and in the other world. What a difference is there between a dark shadowy night, and a fair bright day? such will there be between the state of grace and glory. Their knowledge will be exceedingly extensive, beyond what it is now; and their comfort and joy exceedingly great, beyond what any time they now are.

Lastly, It is the Christian's own fault, if he wants comfort in the hardest pieces of his lot, John xiv. 18. They were never ill dined, we say, that know of a good supper. Whatever be the entertainment of a child of God here, there is a blessed entertainment awaiting him there, and as the workman works cheerfully in prospect of his wages, and the traveller goes cheerfully knowing he is going home? so the Christian should comfort himself in this world, with the prospect of the other world.

USE II. Of exhortation. Let such as are married to Christ, having received him in his covenant, and given themselves to him, learn to comfort themselves with the prospect of the other world, where the day will break, and the shadows flee away. To move unto this, consider these things,

1. You will certainly need comfort in this world. Take what way ye will, ye will meet with sorrows, difficulties, and hardships, that ye will be in need of some cordials to keep you from fainting; and being married to Christ, ye will need them in a special manner; for then your God will have you exercised with various trials, the world will withdraw its countenance from you, and Satan will set himself against you with a pecular spite.

2. The comforts of this world are deceitful, and will never be found able to balance the sorrows of it, being but "broken cisterns that can hold no water," Jer. ii. 13. Some of them they can do nothing at all to, as in Belshazzar's case under the terror of God; at best they can but amuse for a while, but the grief recurs. So that in the end one must say to them, "Miserable comforters are ye all:" They are a weak dyke that will be carried away with the flood in a little.

3. The other world is a fountain of comfort in all cases ye can be in, temporal or spiritual.

Here the man in outward trouble may find a salve for his sore.

If he is oppressed with poverty, he may comfort himself with prospect of the treasure there, and the inheriting all things; if he is under contempt of the proud, he may comfort himself with the prospect of the glory there; if he is under sickness of body, the leaves of the trees there are for the healing of the nations. If he weary, there is rest there; has he no certain abode? there they go no more out, &c.

Here the man in spiritual distress may comfort himself. Is the body of sin heavy? in the other world there will be a freedom from it. Is he dogged with temptations? there the tempter cannot enter. Is he under desertion? there is uninterrupted communion with God there. There is nothing one can meet with heavy here, but a believing view of the other world may afford suitable consolation against it.

Lastly, The comforting of yourselves with the prospect of the other world, is a duty wherein ye will at once singularly honour God, and consult your own interest.

(1.) Hereby ye will honour God's testimony, trusting him for things unseen, Heb. xi. 1. So ye will give him the glory of his faithfulness. He has magnified his word above all his name, and you will magnify it by believing it indeed.

(2.) It will strengthen you notably in your Christian walk, Neh. viii. 10. "The joy of the Lord is your strength." It will carry you above the world's smiles, and make the world's great things little in your eyes, Phil. iii. 8. It will strengthen against its frowns, and bear you up under the greatest trials, 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18.

I shall close with the following directions.

1. Keep Christ the Lord of the other world in your view as your Lord and Husband, looking to "be found in him, not having your own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith," Phil. iii. 9. We can draw no comfort from the other world, but in that blessed channel; in him are all our hopes, for by him only we have a title to heaven.

2. Inure yourselves to an habitual looking to the other world, 2 Cor. iv. 18. When the habitual frame of the heart is carnal, no wonder that a glance with the eye to the other world be not comfortable; but when the habitual bent is upward, occasional glances that way will have a good effect.

Lastly, Frame the whole course of your life in a suitableness, not to this, but the other world, Rom. xii. 2. Carry as travellers to Zion, going through this wilderness to the promised land. Let your conversation be suitable to an expectant of that better world, namely, in heaven, Phil. iii. 20.

I now go on to the last doctrine I observed from the text, namely,

Doct. III. It will be the great concern of those married to Christ during their night-journey in this world, that he may turn and come to them, till the day breaking and the shadows fleeing away, they get to him in the other world.

In discoursing from this doctrine, I shall,

I. Shew what is Christ's turning and coming to them, that will be their great concern to have.

II. Give the import of this concern, that he may turn and come to them, till the day break and the shadows flee away.

III. Give the reasons of this concern.

IV. Confirm this point, that this will be the great concern of those married to Christ.

V. *Lastly*, Apply the doctrine.

I. I am to shew what is Christ's turning and coming to those married to him, that will be their great concern to have. We may take it up in two things.

1. His affording them his presence. That will be their great concern to enjoy during their night-journey; that if they must have a dark and shadowy night-journey of it through the world, he would not leave them, but be with them in it, Exod. xxxiii. 15. "If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence." No body can want God's essential presence, whereby he is every where present, Psalm cxxxix. 7. and downwards. He is not far from any, Acts xvii. 27. But where is his gracious presence, whereby he is present with the children of men by his Spirit of holiness working in them; in which respect he is far from the wicked, Prov. xv. 29. and sometimes withdraws from his own in part, Cant. v. 6. though never totally, Heb. xiii. 5. Their concern then will be for,

(1.) His seen or sensible presence with them, of the want of which Job complains, Job xxiii. 8, 9. and in the enjoyment of which the Psalmist triumphs, Ps. xxiii. 4. As the Israelites had the pillar of fire by night present with them, discovering itself by its own light; so would they have the presence of God with them, discovering itself to them by its own light. For though they have it, if they perceive it not, they cannot have the comfort of it, as in Mary's case, John xx. 14, 15.

(2.) His operative or efficacious presence in them, Phil iii. 8, 10. "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord—that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death." As the Israelites' concern was for the

pillar of fire to enlighten their darkness, to guide them in their night-marches, &c. so will believers be concerned for Christ's presence to enlighten them, quicken, strengthen, and purify them; to work in them mightily. And unless they find it operative, they will not reckon they have it.

2. His affording them his countenance, the shining of his face, and the manifestation of his favour, Ps. vi. 6. "Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us." The unbelievers never have, Ps. vii. 11; there is always a cloud on it to them; they are not pleased with him, and he is never pleased with them, Heb. xi. 6. And this believers sometimes want, Isa. lvii. 17. "I hid me, and was wroth;" though they are never cast out of his favour, they may fall to be deprived of the manifestations of it for a time. Their concern then will be for,

(1.) The turning away of his anger, and removal of any ground of controversy he has with them, Ps. lxxxv. 4. "Turn us, O God of our salvation, and cause thine anger towards us to cease." Herein the church rejoiceth, Isa. xii. 1. "O Lord, I will praise thee; though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortest me." They will be concerned, that while the shades are thick and gloomy about them below, heaven may not be lowering on them too; but that it may be clear above, though it be dark and shadowy below.

(2.) The manifestations of his love, Cant. viii. 6. "Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm," and i. 2. "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth; for thy love is better than wine." The carnal world knows none of these things, and therefore cannot be concerned for them. Proud scornful sinners deride them as vain imaginations of fantastic fools. But in the experience of the saints, they are more powerful and efficacious, than all the pleasurable enjoyments earth can afford, Psal. iv. 6, 7. They will carry them through the dark and difficult steps, where all the world's cordials will leave its votaries to faint.

II. I shall give the import of this concern of those married to Christ, that he may turn and come to them, till the day's breaking and the shadows' fleeing away, they get to him in the other world. It imports,

1. That during the night-journey in this world, Christ sometimes turns away and withdraws from his people; so that seeking him they cannot find him, Cant. iii. 1. "By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth; I sought him but I found him not." Even as Moses who brought the Israelites out of Egypt, was withdrawn from them in the wilderness, and they knew not what was be-

come of him. Christ seems sometimes to lock up himself from his people, for his own holy ends, that they cannot have that access to him as sometime before. So he puts a difference betwixt earth and heaven, the house of their pilgrimage and their home, that they may like home the better.

2. The travellers to Zion, when Christ is away, though it be night, they readily miss him, Cant. iii. 3. "The watchmen that go about the city, found me, to whom I said, Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?" Indeed it may at times be with them as with Samson, Judg. xvi. 20, who "wist not that the Lord was departed from him." But that is through the inadvertancy; if they once begin to look about them, they will be sure to miss him, as the spouse did, Cant. v. 6. It is a property of a gracious soul, to be capable to tell Christ's visits, his goings and comings. It is not every one can do that: worldly men reign as kings without him, they miss him not; the blind man cannot tell when the day comes in, or when the night; but the seeing can do both. The wife can readily tell when her husband goes abroad, and when he comes home; though the servants being without about their work, may know neither the one nor the other.

3. A holy dissatisfaction with all things, while he is away. An angel's presence could not please Moses in the wilderness, Ex. xxxv. 2, 15. nor dry Mary's cheeks in the garden, while she knew not where her Lord was, John xx. 12, 13. The house though thronged with servants is empty to the wife, while her beloved husband is not there. The gracious soul would make stepping-stones of all, to carry it to Christ the best beloved.

4. A holy resolution to give him a welcome reception, if he will turn and come again; then the doors should be cast wide open to receive him, Cant. viii. 1, 2. "O that thou wert as my brother that sucked the breasts of my mother!" &c. And this is joined with self-loathing, for giving him occasion to depart. "What a madman," says one in this concern, "was I, that I could not keep his presence when I had it? But O! if I had it again, I should not so easily quit it."

5. Earnest outgoings of the heart after him in desires for his return, Isa. lxix. 1. "O that thou wouldst rend the heavens, that thou wouldst come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence." Job xxiii. 3. "O that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat!" While the soul is in this concern, one messenger will be sent to heaven after another, in solemn prayer, and frequent ejaculations, with that message, Cant. v. 8. "I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my Be-

loved, that ye tell him, that I am sick of love." And when they can do no more, they will send greedy looks after him, to the place where his honour dwells, as did David, Ps. v. 3. and the church, Lam. iii. 49, 50.

Lastly, A holy restlessness in the soul, till he turn and come again, Cant. iii. 1. and downwards. In this concern how restless was Job, going backward and forward, looking on the right and left hand? chap. xxii. 8, 9. As the needle in the seaman's compass touched with a good loadstone, rests not till it turn about to the north; so the soul touched by the Spirit of Christ, presently moves towards him, Cant. v. 4. or as the dove sent out of the ark could not rest till it was taken in again.

III. Let us next give the reasons of this concern in those married to Christ, that he may turn and come to them. I offer you the following,

1. Their superlative love to Christ, Cant. i. 3, 4. "Because of the savour of thy good ointment, thy name is as ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love thee—The upright love thee." Love natively tends to union and communion; hence the soul is more where it loves than where it lives; it exerts itself in desire after the presence of its object, when at a distance; and has much ado to bear absence. But alas! Christ may tell most of us, as Delilah did Samson, Judg. xvi. 15. "How canst thou say, I love thee, when thine heart is not with me?"

2. Their comfort in their night journey depends on it; without it they must go drooping, for nothing will make up the want thereof. It is Christ's turning to them in it, that makes all they meet with by the way savoury to them, and the want of it is a worm at the root of their enjoyments. The dove could find nothing out of the ark, but carrion, that it could not feed on; and therefore returns; but the raven could feed on it very well, and therefore comes not in again. Hypocrites will bestow a few faint wishes on Christ; but if he answers them not, they are not sore slain therewith; they have more doors than his to go to; if they come not speed at his, they know how to shift for themselves otherwise. But sincere souls must either be served or die at his door, John vi. 68. "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life."

3. Their experience of the desirableness of his presence and countenance in their night-journey, Ps. lxiii. 1—3. "O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee; my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; to see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary. Because thy loving-kindness is better than life; my lips shall praise

thee." It is natural to be in concern for that which one still needs, and remembers himself to have been the better of formerly. They know his presence has made them safely pass many a dangerous step, and easily get over many a difficult one; that his countenance has often enlightened the darkness of their night, and made them confidently pass many a gloomy shade.

Lastly, Their felt need of it; they know not how they will ever make out the night-journey without it, Ex. xxxiii. 15. "And he said unto him, if thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence." It was in the faith of his presence and countenance, that ever they ventured on it; and in the faith of the same, that ever they look to get fair to the journey's end. And felt need of it must produce a concern for it, Mark vii. 24, 25. rising from,

(1.) The sense of their liableness to mistake their way, that they need him for their direction and guidance, Jer. x. 23. If he should leave them, they will reckon themselves left in a wilderness, and that in the night; no wonder then they be in such concern for his presence and countenance.

(2.) The sense of their weakness for the journey, that they need to go leaning on him, as a weak woman on her husband, Cant. viii. 5. Sense of weakness in themselves, and of the fulness of strengthening grace in him, prompt them to this concern.

(3.) The sense of the great opposition and difficulty to be met with in the way, Eph. vi. 12, 13. Christian soldiers have no brow for battle, if Christ their Captain be not on their head, 2 Cor. iii. 5. and they will stick at nothing howsoever hard, if he be, Phil. iv. 13. "I can do all things," says Paul, "through Christ which strengtheneth me."

IV. We shall now confirm this point, That it will be the great concern of those married to Christ, during their night-journey in this world, that he may turn and come to them till the day breaking and the shadows fleeing away, they get to him in the other world. To evince this, we offer the following things:

1. Christ their Lord and Husband has got their heart above all other, and it rests in him. They have answered the call, Prov. xxiii. 26. "My son, give me thine heart." They have said, he is their rest, Heb. iv. 3. as in the state of marriage; they close their eyes on all others, never thinking to see an object so desirable, Ps. lxxiii. 25. Now, "where the treasure is, there will the heart be also," Mat. vi. 21. Wherefore it cannot miss to be their concern, that he may turn and come to them; even as when a woman has fixed her heart on and accepted one for her husband, it is natural to desire frequent visits, till he take her home for altogether.

2. They are partakers of the divine nature, 2 Pet. i. 4. partakers of Christ, of his Spirit, his grace, his image; and like draws to like; the carnal worldling to the world, and the Christian to Christ. As the water exhaled from the sea by the influence of the sun, is gathered into clouds, which dissolved it falls down on the earth again, where cast up by springs it empties itself by rivers, and brooks into the sea again whence it came, Eccl. i. 7.; so grace comes down from above, from the fulness thereof in the man Christ, into his Christians, and watering them does in the exercise thereof mount up again towards him in such breathings after him, and concern that he may turn and come to them.

3. All believers may be observed to be great miscounters of time, when Christ is turned away from them in their night-journey, Is. liv. 7. "For a small moment have I forsaken thee," &c. compare Psal. xiii. 1. "How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord, for ever? how long wilt thou hide thy face from me?" As the time wherein the moon hides her head to the traveller by night seems long, in comparison of the time of her shinning bright; so the time of Christ's withdrawing and hiding his face from a gracious soul is a weary time, a kind of petit eternity. Which speaks a mighty concern.

Lastly, When they are themselves, they are resolute for his presence and countenance, Eph. vi. 15. Grace gives men an edge for holy violence, Matt. xi. 11. It will make men very peremptory for Christ, that they will not take a refusal, Gen. xxxii. 26, to threap kindness on him, and special interest in him, Is. lxiii. 16. to make an argument of their unworthiness and misery, mustered up against them to mar their confidence, Mat. xv. 27. and to stick at nothing standing betwixt Christ and them, so as they may get to him, Phil. iii. 8.

I shall now conclude this subject with some application of what has been said.

USE I. Of information. This shews that,

1. The grace of God ennobles the heart, makes it to aspire to the highest things, and gives it a bent of desire beyond others. (1.) It carries the heart off this world and sets it on the other world, as the place of their great hopes, Col. iii. 1. Others may desire their portion in this life, and eagerly pursue it there; but they will certainly carry their views quite beyond it to the other world, Phil. iii. 13, 14. (2.) It gives them a new notion of heaven, and refined desires thereof, as the place where they may be with Christ, Phil. i. 23. Carnal men have carnal desires of heaven, as a place of rest, welfare, and happiness, abstracted from the enjoyment of God in

Christ; but it is Christ's being there, and full communion with him to be enjoyed there, that is the main spring of the gracious soul's desire to be there, Col. iii. 3, 4.

2. That the soul once truly married to Christ is fixed as to its choice, never to alter it, on any terms; neither to be boasted from him by the world's frowns, nor bribed from him by its smiles, Heb. iv. 3. Cant. viii. 6, 7. Be the night never so dark, the journey never so hard, they are resolute to go on, till the day-breaking they get to him in the other world.

3. The travellers to Zion desire and look for their furniture for the way from Christ, as well as their entertainment at the journey's end, Cant. viii. 5. "Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her Beloved?" There are many who discover their hypocrisy, by desiring no more of him, than that he will take them into his covenant at the beginning of their way, and into his heaven at the end of it; having little concern for his presence and countenance during their progress. They would have a rest to their consciences from him at their setting off, and a rest to their souls from him at the end; but the rest to their hearts, while they are going on their way, they look for in the world and in their lusts. Such will be miserably disappointed; for "without holiness no man shall see the Lord," Heb. xii. 14.

USE II. Of trial. Hereby ye may try your state. If ye be really joined to the Lord Christ as your Head and Husband, to be with him in the other world, it will be your great concern to enjoy such communion with him here, as is allowed his people by the way, till ye come to get full communion with him there. There is a twofold communion with Christ allowed to his people by the way to the other world.

1. Habitual communion, which is a commonness of interest with him, 1 John i. 3. "Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." This is a necessary result of the spiritual marriage-tie, and believers never want it from the moment of their union with Christ. They may set their names on what is his, as having a joint interest therein with him;—"all are yours; and ye are Christ's," 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23. They have with him a common interest in his righteousness, what he did, what he suffered, in his Spirit, purchase, graces wherewith he is filled, &c.

2. Actual communion, which consists in a certain friendly intercourse betwixt Christ and the soul, he letting down the influences of his grace on them, and they moving towards him in the exercise of grace, Cant. i. 4. "Draw me, we will run after thee; the King hath brought me into his chambers," &c. This a believer may want for

a time; and this is the thing desired in the text, under the name of Christ's "turning, and being like a roe, or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether." And the desire of this communion with him is the touchstone of a gracious state. There are several degrees of it.

(1.) Communion with Christ by desires awake after him, Isa. xxvi. 9. "With my soul have I desired thee in the night, yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early;" when the spiritual hunger and thirst after him is created in the soul, and the soul longs, thirsts, and pants after him, Ps. lxiii. 1. This cannot be but by influences from him, whereby the soul is set in motion after him, Cant. v. 4. It is a step to more, Mat. v. 6. "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled."

(2.) Communion with Christ in the exercise of a faith of adherence to him, Ps. xxii. 1. "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Though the soul cannot sing, yet it will resolutely say to him, "My God." Though his dispensations are black and drumly, and seeming to go against the promise, yet the soul will hold by the grip of the promise, saying as Job xiii. 15. "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." It is a power from on high that teacheth one's hands so to war.

(3.) Communion with Christ in the exercise of hope, Ps. xlii. 5. "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance." Though sensible enjoyment is wanting, and there is no present feeling; yet the soul, believing the promise, hopes for the accomplishment of it in due time. So it waits on about his hand, in the diligent use of the means; expecting a good issue at length. This is the product of divine influences, according to the apostle's prayer, Rom. xv. 13. "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

(4.) Communion with Christ in sensible enjoyment; when they are admitted to see his face by a faith of assurance, hear his voice so as to know it, taste of his goodness, smell the savour of his name, Cant. i. 3, and to feel the workings of his grace on their souls. This fills the soul with solid comfort, refined delight, and sometimes with heavenly rapture, 1 Pet. i. 8.

Now what gust have ye for these things? Is it indeed your great concern to reach them the habitual course of your life, and so to have communion with Christ while in this world, till ye get full communion with him in the other? If the enjoyment of such communion with Christ while here, is your great concern, then,

[1.] Ye will desire it above all things else ye can reach in this world, preferring it to the best things that earth affords, Psal. iv. 6, 7. Ye will value it more than the profits and pleasures of the world, counting them but dung in comparison thereof.

[2.] Ye will highly prize holy ordinances, public, private, and secret, as the means of communion with Christ; and yet not be satisfied with them without communion with him in them. They to whom these are a burden or tasteless, plainly discover they value not communion with Christ, these being the galleries wherein the King is held, Cant. vii. 5.; they are not of the Psalmist's mind, who say, Psal. lxxxiv. 10. "A day in thy courts is better than a thousand; I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God, than dwell in the tents of wickedness. Those that rest in them, and are pleased when the task is got done, shew they value not the true use of them, represented to us in the spouse's practice, Cant. iii. 2. "I will rise now, and go about the city in the streets, and in the broad ways I will seek him whom my soul loveth."

[3.] It will be your great concern to guard against whatever may mar it, or keep you back from it; and to keep the way wherein you may obtain it. That is you will beware of living in the allowed practice of sin, but be tender and holy in your lives, Psal. lxvi. 18. John xiv. 21.

USE III. Evidence yourselves truly married to Christ, by making it your great concern to have actual communion with Christ here, till ye come to the full enjoyment of him in the other world, To press this, I offer these motives very briefly.

1. This is necessary to evidence your sincerity in the marriage covenant, 1 John ii. 19. "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us." Being careless of communion with Christ, speaks that the heart is not with him, but with other lovers.

2. It is necessary to your getting safe through an ensnaring world; therefore says Christ to his people, Cant. iv. 8. "Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from Lebanon; look from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir, and Hermon, from the lions' dens, from the mountains of the leopards," if ye are left alone, ye will fall in the wilderness.

Lastly, Without communion with Christ here, there will be no communion with him in the other world, according to what the Psalmist says, Psal. lxxiii. 24, "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory." Communion with Christ in grace here, is the foundation of communion with him in glory hereafter.

I close with these few directions.

1. Look for communion with Christ in the way of free grace and unhired love; that he may come over mountains to you, mountains of guilt and unworthiness, as undeserving such a high privilege.

3. Seek it resolutely in all means of his appointment, going from one mean and ordinance to another till ye find him, as the spouse did, Cant. iii. 1. and downwards. So may ye, persevering, succeed, whatever difficulties be in your way.

3. Be diligent observers of providences, and make a due improvement of them as means of communion with him, Psal. xcii. 4. and cvii. ult.

Lastly, Be habitually tender in your walk; keeping off from every thing that may grieve his Spirit, and provoke him to depart; acting in this case as the spouse did, Cant. iii. 5. "I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem by the roes, and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love till he please."

READINESS FOR OUR REMOVAL INTO THE OTHER WORLD OPENED UP, URGED, AND ENFORCED.

The substance of several Sermons preached at Ettrick in the year 1730.

Luke xii. 40.

Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.

After all we have heard of the other world, what will it avail, if it issue not in preparing for our removal into it? That is certainly the use which all of us are to make of it, which we have in the words of the text. In which we have two things:

1. An alarm to be ready for the removal into the other world, "Be therefore ready also," In the parable of the rich man, ver. 16—21. our Saviour had shown the dreadful surprising removal of secure sinners into it, when they are not at all ready for it, but dreaming of a long continuance at ease here, which puts preparation for it out of their heads. And thence he proceeds to caution against inordinate care for this uncertain life, and to stir up to be ready, to be on the wing, for the other life, ver. 35.; and to be

always ready, as those that are at an uncertainty as to the time of their removal. This is to be ready also, as well as the goodman of the house would be if he knew what hour the thief would come.

2. The reason why we should be ready, always ready, never unprepared: "For the son of man cometh at an hour when we think not." Because we know not when we may be called off, more than one knows what time of the night the thief will break in on his house. Now Christ the son of man comes as a thief, at a time uncertain to us. There is a twofold coming of the Son of man. (1.) At the general judgment. (2.) At death. Both are to remove us into the other world; the word is general, agreeing to both; and in point of our making ready they come to one, because whatever readiness they can be in for the general judgment, must be made before death, there being no access after that to make ready any more, but as the tree falls it lies. So we shall consider it as his coming at death, to carry us off hence. There are two things here:

1*st*, The certainty of our removal into the other world,—"The Son of man cometh;" he will certainly come, how long soever he may delay his coming. That is a tryst that cannot be broken.

2*dly*, The uncertainty of the time of it, as to *us*, however precisely it is appointed in the divine decree; he has not told us when it shall be, more than the thief tells the good-man when he is to make an attempt on his house. So that if there be any time when we are not ready, he may for any thing we know, as readily come then, as at any time.—From the text ariseth this weighty point of doctrine, viz.

Doct. Such is the certainty of our removal into the other world, and the uncertainty of the time of that removal, that we ought always to be ready for it.

In discoursing from this doctrine, I shall,

I. Premise some things imported in it.

II. Consider the certainty of our removal into the other world.

III. The uncertainty of the time of it.

IV. The readiness for that removal.

Lastly, Apply in some practical uses.

I. I shall premise some things imported in this doctrine.

1. Great is the weight that depends on our being ready for a removal into the other world. Eternal well or woe depends on it; for according to the situation we are found in at our removal, so will we be received and lodged there; in the upper part, the region of bliss, or the lower part, the region of horror, to remove no more. And this makes carelessness to prepare for it absolutely unaccountable.

2. We are naturally unfit, and unready for that removal. Were it a matter indifferent which part of that world we should land in, we could at no time be reckoned unfit and unready for it; for they that are not ready for eternal light above, are ready for eternal fire below. But it can never be indifferent to a rational creature, which of these shall be its portion. And therefore they that are not ready to be inhabitants of heaven, are not ready for their removal; and such are we all naturally, having no title to it, Eph. ii. 3, 12, and no meetness for it, till we get it anew by grace, Col. i. 12.

3. Now is the time, and here is the place, of getting ready, 2 Cor. vi. 3. "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." We are set into this world, to make ready for the other; and time is given us to prepare for eternity. If time be once over, and we be turned out of this world, we have no more access to make ready for the other, Eccl. ix. 10. "There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest." So it is with us, now or never.

Lastly, We ought always to keep ourselves in readiness, that we be not surprised and taken at a disadvantage; hence says our Lord, Luke xxi. 34—36. "Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." One may be ready at one time, who is not ready at another as he ought to be; falling carnally secure, after he has bestirred himself to prepare. But at that time when he is least looking for the removal, it may be nearest; and whatever unreadiness it trysts him with, so great will the loss be.

II. We shall consider the certainty of our removal into the other world.

1. It was the other world, and not this, that man was chiefly and in the first place designed for, as to his settled abode. When God made this world, he made it but as a thoroughfare to the other, a place through which man should pass into the other, Matth. xxv. 34. The other world was always the home, this was but the place of the pilgrimage, where at no time man was to stay for good at all, but only to sojourn. For consider,

(1.) This world was ordained to be the place of trial, the other the place of retribution, according to men's works. The trial cannot always last, otherwise it would be no trial; but the retribution

may very well last for ever, and really will do so. Therefore we must necessarily remove out of this world as the place of trial, into the other as the place of retribution, which therefore must be looked on as our settled abode, Matth. xxv. ult. "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal."

(2.) This world never had in it, that perfection of either happiness or misery, that was designed for man according to his behaviour in it. Even in paradise there was a want, and in the deluge there was an ark. But God will perfect his work of whatever kind. Therefore the settled abode is there, not here.

Wherefore it is a fatal mistake ever to look on this world as our home, whether we be saints or sinners; that is the use of the other world only.

2. The man Christ is removed into the other world, never to come back to dwell in this; and to that world where he is we must needs go. The happiness secured for his own people, who must be taken to the place where he is, John xiv. 3. and the misery ensured for his enemies, who must be "punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord," 2 Thess. i. 2. brought thither and slain before him, Luke xix. 27. make this necessary. Therefore, as sure as Christ hath removed into that world, we must follow.

3. Men must be for ever, but this world will have an end; therefore our removal out of it into the other world is most certain. "This is not your rest, because it is polluted;" and because of its pollution, it must be burned up, 2 Pet. iii. 10. Now the soul is immortal, and the body shall have a resurrection, and so the man must be for ever; he must be in some world, and since this will be destroyed, he must certainly remove to the other.

4. Our life in this world is a journey through it, ending in a going out of it, and therefore into the other world, Psal. xxxix. ult. We enter upon it at our birth, make progress therein in our life, and come to the end of it at death, which is the passage into the other world. All things are in motion here, and every thing undergoes changes; but none does more so than man, who springs up, and quickly goes down again; and at length his place knows him no more.

4. Death, the passage into the other world, is appointed to all, Heb. ix. 27. "It is appointed unto men once to die." All must pass through that dark and shady vale, and then they are in the other world; and have no more concern in what is done under the sun. And the certainty of our dying, we may not only read in our bibles; but in our very bodies themselves, where every gripe, pain,

and weakness we feel overtaking us, are tokens of death approaching.

Lastly, The experience of all ages since the beginning confirms the certainty of this removal. Where are the generations that have been before us? They are no more to be seen in this world, more than if they had never been in it. Yet God's word assures us that they are in being, the godly ones of them happy, and the ungodly miserable. They are gone then into the other world. And do we not see by daily observation, that the course of dying is continuing as before? And are there any of us all, who have not some that were our acquaintance in this world, already removed into the other before us? And are we to expect the rocks to be removed for us?

III. The next head is to consider the uncertainty of the time of this removal. And here I shall shew,

1. How this uncertainty of the time of our removal is to be understood.

2. How it appears.

3. Why the Lord has kept men at this uncertainty.

FIRST, I am to shew how this uncertainty of the time of our removal is to be understood.

1. It is not to be understood, as if the time of our removal were absolutely uncertain, and undetermined with God. No; it is determined exactly and precisely to the least moment, at what time each of us shall make our removal into the other world, how much time we shall pass in this life, and beyond which we shall not go, Job xiv. 4. "His days are determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass." However uncertain it is as to us, it is as certain before the Lord as anything can be. This is evident; for,

The decree of God reacheth the least of things, even to the very numbering of the hairs of our head, Matt. x. 30. And can we think that he who numbers the hairs of our head, numbers not the days of our life that we shall fulfil? Truly they are soon numbered to him, being "as an handbreadth, and as nothing before him," Psal. xxxix. 5. and he knows them exactly, Job xiv. 5. How else could he foreshew certainly men's death, as he did Moses's, Deut. xxxi. 14. and that of Jeroboam's child? 1 Kings xiv. 12, 17.

It is certain, that man cannot subsist a moment, but as God holds him in life; so the withdrawing of his support must put an end to it, Psal. xc. 3. And he knows certainly what he will do, Acts xv. 18. And who can doubt, but he certainly knows when he is to receive his own people into glory, and when the day of his enemies

will come? Fifteen years were added to the years that Hezekiah had lived, but not to the term of life appointed of God. But,

2. This uncertainty is to be understood, with reference to us. Though it is certain in respect of the decree of God, yet it is uncertain in respect of our knowledge of it. Men may conjecture about it by signs; and no doubt God may as he sees meet discover the time of one's removal, either to himself or to others. But otherwise, it is most uncertain to us.

SECONDLY, I shall shew how this uncertainty of the time of our removal appears.

1. Our removal depends entirely on the will of another, quite concealed from us, Luke xii. 36. It is so with us, that we cannot go when we please, were we never so fond of the other world, or weary of this. It is the will of his command revealed, that we wait the will of his providence for the removing, in all cases without exception, Ex. xx. 13. It was the peculiar prerogative of the man Christ, to be Lord of his own life, John x. 18. And though desperate proud sinners invade it, he can by his providence draw a bar before them, that either in mercy or in wrath shall oblige them to wait his time, of both which there have been instances; howbeit sometimes in wrath, the will of his providence attends their will, and gives them their swing. But however, our removal depends not on our own but his will, not to be discovered but by the event; which therefore makes it utterly uncertain to us.

2. We plainly perceive that God does not keep one time for the removal of men into the other world. Had he appointed one certain term of years and days, to which every one should come, and nobody fall short of; then we would have had no more ado to know our time, but to have counted what we were short of that common term of life; but there is no such common term appointed, but some are removed sooner, others later; and there is no stage of life whatsoever, infancy, childhood, youth, middle age, old age, but some are removed therein. And which of them we have not seen shall be ours, we know not. So we are kept uncertain.

3. As there is no period of life, so there is no state of health, that may not be brangled by sickness, and overthrown by death. When men are in a fixed state of health, strong, lively, and vigorous, they seem to be farthest removed from death; but how often do we see death at the heels of such a state? How many strong and lusty go off as soon as these that are weak, groaning under various infirmities? Job xxi. 23—26. We have an instance, in the rich man that fared sumptuously every day, as well as the beggar which was laid at his gate full of sores, Luke xvi. 22. Nay, often

the weak and sickly prolong their life, while the strong are moved down and carried off one after another, Job iii. 20, 21. "Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery, and life unto the bitter in soul? which long for death, but it cometh not, and dig for it more than for hid treasures?" Compared with Luke xii. 19, 20. "And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee." What uncertainty appears there?

4. Oft-times when death is least minded, and farthest out of one's thoughts, it is at the door; the removal into the other world comes when men are thinking of nothing, but fixing themselves and enjoying the pleasure of this, 1 Thess. v. 3. "For when they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape," Luke xii. 20. just cited. How many have revelled away into the other world, going down to the sides of the pit, as with tabret and pipe! how many drunkards and debauchees have never come to themselves, till they were removed out of this world! going into that world without a capacity for a previous thought of it! So utterly uncertain are men.

5. Man's life is liable to various accidents, for taking it away, Eccl. ix. 12. "For man also knoweth not his time, as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare; so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them." What though you are in perfect health, and no cause of death appears from within? There are so many things from without, that may beat up your quarters in this world, and hurry you into the other, that ye are still at an uncertainty; "as when a man goeth into the wood with his neighbour to hew wood, and his hand fetcheth a stroke with the ax to cut down the tree, and the head slippeth from the helve, and lighteth upon his neighbour that he die, Deut. xix. 5; Luke xiii. 1, 4. Fire, water, stones falling or lying in the way, beasts of the field, fowls of the air, &c. a thousand unforeseen accidents may be instruments of our removal, blowing out life.

6. How often do men seeking life find death; and labouring for their stay, hasten their removal; Such uncertainty are we kept at. Sensual men pamper the body, with design to keep it up; and by their intemperance in eating and drinking, destroy it; laying on so much fuel that they put out the fire. And where that is not the case, how often is death found in physic, and in necessary food, taken with a design to preserve life? 2 Kings iv. 40. A morsel at

a meal has choked some, and removed them from their covered table into the other world. A hair in milk, and a stone in a raisin, it is said, has done the business.

Lastly, Where there has been no visible cause from without, nor sensible cause from within, how many have suddenly dropt down dead, to the perfect surprise of their relations and neighbours aware of no cause thereof! Our life is in the hand of the Giver always, as a ball in the hand of him that holds it up; there needs no more but to withdraw that hand, and that moment we fall, Psal. xc. 3. "Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return, ye children of men, and civ. 29.

THIRDLY, It remains on this head to shew why the Lord has kept men at this uncertainty. No doubt God could have made the time of our removal into the other world as open as the time of the setting of the sun, &c. But he has concealed it from us. It is meet to consider why. We pretend not to give a reason moving the divine will; but the reasonableness of it, or for what causes the Lord has willed the concealment of that time from us, we may consider. The reasons are these,

I. It is best for his own glory and honour, the chief end of all things. Hereby he shows,

(1.) His mastership over mankind, who of right are his servants, however refractory most of them are. Every master thinks it his right to have his servants at his call, without a previous tryst, Matt. viii. 9. How much more is God's right over us, to call us off when he will, from the place where he has set us, to the place he has appointed us for after? Our Lord teacheth us this, that he claims this as a Master to come when he will, and that his servants be ready waiting on, Luke xii. 36, 38. "that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately. And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants."

(2.) The efficacy of his authority, Eccl. viii. 8. "There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death; and there is no discharge in that war, neither shall wickedness deliver those that are given to it." He has revealed the will of his command to men, in his laws; and that is disregarded in great part by all, and wholly by some, in life. How necessary then is it, that the authority so often trampled on by mortals in life, should be vigorously executed at length, in obliging them to obey the will of his providence, without knowing aforehand when? He sets trysts with men for duty, which they regard not;

the vindicating of his authority requires their removal to give account, upon sight of his summons.

(3.) His sovereignty. It is a sign of his sovereign dominion over us. Solomon observes, Prov. xxv. 3. that "the heart of kings is unsearchable." Kings of the earth have their secrets of government, which their subjects are not to pry into, but obey orders: God has a sealed book of decrees, which none but the Lamb is worthy to open the seals of. It proclaims his sovereign dominion over mankind, that he keeps such a momentous point concerning them concealed, ver. 20. And it is apt to strike an awe of him on those who consider it, as of an absolute Lord, whom we are to obey without disputing and upon the first call; with the depths of whose counsel concerning us, we are not to meddle, Deut. xxix. ult.

2. It is best for the good of mankind that it is concealed. Were the book of the decrees laid open before the world, and a liberty given to every one that would, to turn it up, and look out the time of mortals' removal; fools would readily run to it, but wise men, I think, would start back. That the time of our removal into the other world is kept a secret with God, closely concealed, is of good use. If ye ask what use is it for? It is of use,

(1.) For a badge of our dependence on God, every moment. Hereby we are taught, that we are his debtors for every other breath we draw, and pulse that beats; we see we are mere precarious beings in the world, tenants-at-will, not knowing when we may be charged to remove. By this means great and small, old and young, are obliged to see how they wholly depend on the will of God as to their continuance here; a lesson we need to have inculcated on us, we are so apt to forget it.

(2.) For a token to remember the other world. It is natural for them that must remove, and know not how soon, to be often thinking on the place they must remove to; so our uncertainty as to the time of our removal out of this world to the other, natively leads us to think of that world. How ready are we to spend our days in a forgetfulness of the world we are going to, as matters now stand! And how much more would it be so, if we were sure that death were at so many years distance as sometimes it is!

(3.) For a curb to our lusts, to check and bridle our unruly affections. This concealing is of good use to keep us from indulging ourselves in sloth, to still our anxiety, and repress all carnal earthly affections. He that considers the uncertainty of the time of his death, is furnished with an useful means to cool his affections in the pursuit of this world, which otherwise he would be apt to give the loose unto.

(4.) For to be a balance between the rising and standing generations, the young and the aged. While both are kept at an uncertainty, that is not known, which of them shall bury the other, and bury their heirs, this is a mean to keep both in due affection to, and concern for one another. While there is so much unnaturalness in the world, as matters now stand, what would it be if that were certain, that is now but probable?

(5.) For encouragement to people's regular pursuit of their worldly affairs, tending to the good of society. If men were certain as to the time of their removal, it would no doubt make them very slack in their business, and at length cause them quite to give it over, unless pure necessity obliged them thereto; and this would tend to their family's disadvantage, and the prejudice of the public. But God has in wisdom concealed that matter so that to hope of enjoyment, causeth men to be doing till God bid them stop.

(6.) For a seasoning to the comforts of life, that men may get the allowable comfort in them, and the sap may not be from the beginning squeezed out of them. If when the child is born, it were certainly known it were to live but so many days, weeks, or months; or that the parent must leave it at such a certain time; where would the comfort of the relation be? How often would the view of the day of the parting extinguish it? But God, by keeping it out of sight, prevents these sorrows.

(7.) For a band to oblige men to act, not according to future events, but the present call of providence, and so to make them subservient to the designs thereof. Had Jacob known beforehand that Joseph's brethren would have cast him into the pit, and sold him for a slave, he would not have let him go. Who would ever entertain the thought of putting that comfort to their mouth, which they certainly knew would be presently snatched from them, and leave them pierced with many sorrows, which yet often falls out? But God will have men's acting to be regulated, not by events, but the present call of providence. And men may have peace in that, which providence pointed them to, though the event be heavy.

Lastly, For a memorial to be always ready and on our watch. It is reasonable we should be so, and that at no time we should give ourselves to carnal security; but did we certainly know the time of our removal, we would be apt to fall asleep for the time it were at a distance, and think it would be enough to watch and be on our guard when the time were at hand.

Learn we from all this to be well satisfied in the divine conduct as wise and good, in concealing from us the time of our removal; and answer the ends of that dispensation, in acknowledging our

continual dependence on God, taking it as a token to remember the other world, &c.

IV. We are next to consider the readiness for that removal. And there is a twofold readiness for it, habitual and actual.

First, Habitual, in respect of our state. In the state we are in by nature, we are by no means ready for that removal; if we die in that state, we perish. We must be out of it in the state of grace, if ye would be ready, 1 Thess. v. 4. "But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day shall overtake you as a thief." Col. i. 12, 13. "Giving thanks unto the father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son." This is necessary for our safe passage and arrival in the other world. There is no getting into the state of glory, if we are not first brought into the state of grace. To die in the state we were born in, will bury us in the pit. This readiness consists,

1. In being brought into a relative state of grace, whereby the relation we stand in to God by nature, which is a reasonable one, may be changed into a saving relation to him. And this lies especially in four things.

(1.) A state of justification, pardon and absolution. By nature we are God's criminals, under his curse, Eph ii. 3. How can we be ready in that case, for the other world? What can we expect going into it in that condition, but the sentance, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels?" Matth. xxv. 41. Therefore, if we would be ready, we must see to be justified persons, Rom. v. 1, 2. We must sue out a pardon in God's way, and not rest till we be accepted of him, as righteous; for it is such only can have access to heaven, from whom the curse of the broken law is removed. Then, and not till then, is the bar in our way removed.

(2.) A state of reconciliation and peace with God, Amos iii. 3. "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" There can be no walking with him here nor hereafter without it. We are born in a state of enmity with God; there is a legal enmity on the part of heaven against us, a real one in our part; should we remove to the other world in that condition, what could be the issue, but that, Luke xix. 27. "Those mine enemies which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me?" Therefore to be ready for the other world, we must be in a state of peace and friendship with the Lord of it. If we be for Abraham's bosom, we must be as he was, "the friends of God," Jam. ii. 23. This is

the design of the gospel, that we be "reconciled to God," 2 Cor. v. 20.

(3.) A state of adoption into the family of God, 1 John iii. 2. by nature we are children of the devil, John viii. 44. If we remove in that state to the other world, what can we expect but to go home into our father's house? Therefore if we would be ready, that relation must be dissolved; and we must be adopted into the family of God, that when we fail, we may be received into everlasting habitations with his family. If we are not of God's family in the lower house, we will never be of it in the upper; for they are all but one family, Eph. ii. 15.

(4.) A state of peculiar interest in God as our own God. When the man Christ was going to heaven, he says, "I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God," John xx. 17. God himself is the reward of his people, who therefore must be theirs ere they can be ready to remove into the other world, Gen. xv. 1. In our natural state we are without God, Eph. ii. 12. And should we die without him, where can we expect to land in the other world, but without where are the dogs, &c. in outer darkness? Wherefore, to be ready, we must before removing have our Maker to be our Husband, God our Creator to be our God in covenant, according to Heb. viii. 10. "I will be to them a God." For there lies heaven's happiness, Rev. xxi. 3.—"God himself shall be with them, and be their God."

This relative state of grace is necessary to found our right and title to heaven, Matt. xxv. 34. "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom," &c. And certainly we can never remove into the other world, till once it is expected. No body can expect to invade it by force, to get into that part of the other world which they have no right to. No man could judge himself ready to remove into a farm or heritage here, or settle there, till once he had got a right to it; and shall one imagine himself ready for the other world, while he has no right to heaven?

2. This readiness consists in being brought into a real state of grace, whereby the temper and disposition our souls are in by nature, quite unfit for heaven, may be changed into a heavenly one, 2 Cor. v. 5. This lies in two things: (1.) The quickening of our dead souls, Eph. ii. 1. We are by nature spiritually dead; God the soul of our souls is departed from us; so we are lifeless and moveless; dead to God, as really as our departed friends are dead to us. Should we remove in that case to the other world, what issue could be looked for, but that he should bury us out of his sight, as we do our dead

friends? Therefore to be ready, we must be quickened by the return of the Spirit of Christ into us, Rom. viii. 2.

This is called the first regeneration, whereby there is a new principle of action put into the soul, by which the soul believes on Christ, and actively unites with him, John i. 12, 13. and is thereby brought into the relative state foresaid.

(2.) The sanctifying of our natures throughout, 1 Thess. v. 23. By nature we are unholy all over, Tit. i. 15. The soul in all its faculties is wholly defiled; and consequently the body in all its members. Sin reigns in the natural man, living lusts have the mastery of him. What a removal can one have in this case, where the image of God is defaced, Satan's image set up, and sin bears full sway, but that in Prov. xiv. 32. "The wicked is driven away in his wickedness?" To be ready then for the other world, we must be sanctified all over; the mind must be enlightened, the will turned towards the will of God, the affections regulated, and we renewed in the whole man.

This is called the second regeneration, whereby the soul being in Christ by faith is changed into his image, and so made a new creature, 2 Cor. v. 17. Receiving grace for grace in Christ; it has new habits implanted in it, fitting for the doing of good works, Eph. 2. 10.

This real state of grace is necessary to our being meet or fit for heaven, Col. i 12. 2 Cor. v. 5. forecited. Without it we are no more meet for it, than fishes for meadows, an idiot for an estate, or a dead man for a feast. Men look on heaven as a place of ease and rest; without considering it as a holy rest from sin, and an eternal exercise of holiness in heart and life; if they so considered it they would soon see their unmeetness for it, and that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord," Heb. xii. 14.

Lastly, This readiness consists in persevering in that state, relative and real unto the end, Mat. xxiv. 13. "He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." Rev. ii. 10. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." Apostates cannot be ready for the other world; if one removes in apostacy, what can be expected, but as Heb. x. 38. God's "soul shall have no pleasure in him?" Therefore the perseverance of the saints is insured by the strongest security, John x. 28, 29. "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father which gave them me, is greater than all; and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." So that whosoever do make never so fair an appearance, but afterward fall away, they discover that they never were in a state of grace, relative nor real, 1 John ii. 19.

Secondly, There is actual readiness in respect of our frame and

circumstances, Luke xii. 35, 36. The former gives us a safe, this an abundant entrance into the better world, 2 Pet. i. 10, 11. Now one may be habitually ready, who is not actually so; though not contrariwise. But we are called, both by God's word and our own necessity, to actual readiness for that removal. This lies in two things.

1. Putting our house in order, Isa. xxxiii. 1. It is a piece of necessary preparation for the other world, to have our affairs in this world, in such a state, as we may fitly leave them; and no man of business can be excused in a slothful leaving his affairs in confusion, while he is not sure at what time he may be called off. For thereby others may be wronged; and if it be sinful to wrong others in life, it cannot be blameless to wrong them at death, when there is no more access to right them.

2. Keeping our soul's case in order, Luke vii. 35. "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning." Though in conversion the gracious state of our souls is secured; yet it will require much diligence to keep our soul's case right for our removal, and slothfulness may put us out of case for it, Eccl. x. 18. The being of grace is sufficient for the one, but the exercise of grace is necessary for the other. Now an orderly case, fit for one's removing to the other world, lies in these seven things.

(1.) Keeping up actual communion with God, in the course of our life, Cant. ii. ult. "Until the day break, and the shadows flee away; turn my Beloved, and be thou like a roe," &c. Thus was Enoch ready for his removal, Gen. v. 24. "Enoch walked with God, and he was not; for God took him." He who would be actually ready must walk with God in ordinances, in providences, and the whole tenor of his life; being spiritual in religious duties, an observer of providences, accommodating himself thereto, and setting God before him in the course of his actions. Thus he will serve an apprenticeship for the better world, and will be in a case for a removal, since that will only be to him a change of his place, not of his company.

(2.) A heart weaned from this world. Col. iii. 3, 4. "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." David was in case for removing, when he said, Ps. cxxxi. 2. "My soul is even as a weaned child;" and Paul, when he said, Gal. vi. 14. "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." When one is quick and lively in his affection to this world, easily and feelingly touched with its smiles and

frowns, he will be at death like unripe fruit, that takes a sore pull to pluck it off the tree; but the weaned believer will, like ripe fruit, drop off easily. So God's blasting men's worldly comforts, exercising them with infirmities, pains, and sickness, are kindly designed for this end.

(3.) Purity of conscience, Acts xxiv. 15, 16. "And have hope towards God,—that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust. And herein do I exercise myself to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward man." Hereby it is provided, that there is no standing controversy betwixt God and the soul; in which case one is not fit for removal. This is obtained by a strict and tender walk in every thing, whereby the conscience is so far kept from defilement, Psal. lxvi. 18. 1 John iii. 20, 21. And by a daily use-making of the blood of Christ, whereby defilements, which we will inevitably contract, are wiped away, John xiii. 10. A thorn of unpardoned guilt in a believer's conscience, renders him in ill case for the great journey.

(3.) Diligence in our generation work, Luke xii. 43. "Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when he cometh, shall find him so doing." David had a kindly removal upon this, Acts xiii 36. "After he had served his own generation by the will of God *he* fell on sleep." That man has lived long enough, who has got his generation work allotted him expediated, though he do not live to any great age; and they that through sloth neglect it, will find themselves carried off ere they are ready, though they become very old. Happy is the man, that is found so doing, doing still on, as one that sees death at his back; and it is kindly, if the Master soonest loose the sorest wrought servant.

(5.) Willingness to remove and be gone at the Master's call, Luke ii. 29, 30. "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word. For mine eyes have seen thy salvation." They who are mortified to life in a Christian manner, resigned to the divine disposal as to their staying and going, leaving to him the time and manner, are in case for removal. In the soul's closing with Christ, there is a dead stroke given to the love of this life, Luke xiv. 26. But there is a need of repeating the stroke, till the soul be in case to come freely away.

(6.) A well-grounded expectation of a better life in the other world, 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8. "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." For men to pretend willingness to

remove without that, argues either a brutish stupidity, or a delusive security, or a desperate impatience; in all which cases, men are not ready for the removal, however willing. But where there is a Christian assurance or well-grounded hope of a safe landing, that is a piece of the readiness required, 2 Pet. i. 10, 11.

Lastly, Watchfulness and waiting, Luke xii. 37. "Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching." Our Lord has told us, that he will come, but has not told us when; this requires us at all times to guard against spiritual sleep and carnal security; and follow Job's resolve, chap. xiv. 14. "All the days of my appointed time will I wait till my change come." They are not ready who are catched unawares.

Now these things make an actual readiness, which is necessary.

[1.] To fit us for what kind of death it pleases the Lord to remove us by. Hereby we will be in case to remove by sudden death, as good old Eli did, by a raving sickness, as well as by a composed one; or by a violent toss of sickness, or lethargy. For then our work is done, all is ready; we have nothing ado but to go.

[2.] To prevent a hurry, when death is come to the door. Though one is habitually ready, if they are not thus actually ready, the heart in that case is put in confusion with the alarm; and then there are many things to do, and little time to do them in. And that makes a sad hurry, whereas there might be much composure obtained by this method.

[3.] For our comfortable passage, 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8, above cited. The neglect hereof occasions even God's children sometimes either to go off in a cloud and set in a mist, or else to have a sore struggle about their case, ere they get their ravelled case righted. We are not to limit sovereignty, which may leave at any time the most watchful Christian in a damp, as the sun sometimes in a moment gets under a cloud; but surely this is the ordinary means for a comfortable removal.

Lastly, For our greater glorifying God in our removal, as the worthies, Heb. xi. of whom it is said, ver. 13. "These all died in faith, not having received the promises," &c. We should study not only to live, but to die to his glory. That is our last opportunity of acting for God in the world; and it is pity we should be out of case for it. Now when we are thus actually ready beforehand.

(1.) We will have the more time to act for God's honour, our own safety being already secured, as in Stephen's case, whose last breath was spent in praying for his murderers, Acts vii. ult. They that have much to do for their own case on a death-bed, will have little time to spare for the behoof of others to be left behind.

(2.) We will have the more heart, and be in better capacity for consulting God's honour and the good of others; as good old Jacob, while blessing his sons, lifts up his soul in that devout ejaculation, Gen. xlix. 18. "I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord." A clear and comfortable state of our own soul's case, will be oil to the wheels in that matter. I shall now make some practical improvement of this subject.

USE I. For instruction and information. Learn hence,

1. That this world is not our home, but the place of our sojourning; but our home is in the other world, Heb. xiii. 14. We are here as strangers in an inn by the road; but the grave is our long home, and the other world our everlasting home. When men go abroad in this world as travellers, they lay their account not to stay abroad; but sometimes they settle abroad for good and all, so that their return home is uncertain; but our removal from this to the other world is absolutely certain, without all peradventure, it cannot fail.

2. It concerns us nearly, to keep loose grips of this world, and not to dip too deep in it; but to use it passingly as those who are not to stay with it, 1 Cor. vii. 29, 31. The comforts and conveniences of life, are like servants in an inn, who wait on us to the door, but return to wait on other strangers when we are away. It would be folly for the traveller to set his heart on the inn; for that would make his removal from it but the greater grief.

3. It will be our wisdom to acquaint ourselves, as much as may be, with the other world, Job xvii. 13, 14. Were one but to remove into another farm, he would surely acquaint himself with it beforehand; and shall we, who are to remove into the other world, live strangers to it? Nay, let us often visit it, by thinking of it. Though we cannot see it beforehand with the eye, we may by faith; though we cannot go thither for trial, we have the map of it in the Scriptures.

4. It concerns us carefully to acquaint ourselves with the passage to it, 2 Cor. xv. 31. Death is that passage which we must certainly all take. And our happy or wretched landing on the other side, depends entirely on the course we steer through it. What need have we then to be taking instructions about it, fixing them on our hearts timeously, that when we come to pass it, we may take the passage right, where so many are shipwrecked? It is indeed the business of life to learn to die.

5. It is in vain for us to be carnally secure, and to promise on time to come; for our removal is uncertain. In all our projects, hopes, and expectations of things of this life, we should balance

them with the view of the uncertainty of our time, Jam. iv. 13—15. It is folly to boast of what we are not sure of, Prov. xxii. 1. How many a beautiful web of contrivance in the fancies of carnal men has been suddenly cut off, perishing in the thought without ever going further? Ps. cxlvi.; Luke xii.

6. It is folly to be lifted up with prosperity in the world; for it is certain it will not last, and so uncertain when it will come to an end, that it may end ere we are aware, Prov. xxiii. 5. If we begin to nestle in a well feathered nest, we may quickly be tumbled down out of it; and we will get nothing of it with us to the other world. Worldly prosperity makes indeed easy living here; but it is so ensnaring, that it is hard to make the way through it to the happy part of the other world, Mark x. 23.

7. It is needless to be cast down with adversity in the world; for that will not last neither. The world's smiles and frowns, both of them pass away like the foam on the water, Eccl. ix. 6. If one meets with sorry entertainment in an inn by the road, he comforts himself, that he is not to stay with it. In your adversity, your relief may be nearer than ye are aware; your removal is uncertain. Lazarus was cured of his sores, and his hard lair at the rich man's gate, when carried by angels into Abraham's bosom.

Lastly, We can at no time be safe, unprepared for the other world; for what may come at any time, we must be ready at all times, if we would be safe indeed; because whatever time we are not ready, it may come and surprise us unprepared.

USE II. Of reproof, and that to three sorts of persons.

1. Atheists and unbelievers of a future state, who pretend that when men die they are done; and that there are no future rewards and punishments. Such were the Sadducees of old, who judging the soul nothing different from the temperament of the body, held the soul's perishing with the body, and that there was no resurrection, and consequently no removal into another world, Acts xxiii. 8. The whole divine revelation witnesseth against this, so that our Lord proved the resurrection from the Pentateuch, Matt. xxii. 31, 32. The being and nature of God as holy and just, and Governor of the world, overthrows it; since it is evident, that it is not consistent therewith, that evil men should be always the most prosperous, and the good the most afflicted; yet so it must be, if there is not a removal into the other world, where the scales will be turned; "for if in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable," 1 Cor. xv. 19. Besides, this has a witness against it in every man's breast; that it is not to be doubted if any man can reach to be fully satisfied in this principle, Rom. ii. 15. con-

science accusing even for what they are in no hazard for in this world.

There is a lamentable growth of such principles at this day, that the foundations of Christianity were perhaps never in the time of the greatest darkness so much struck at. Of which I shall say only these three things.

(1.) The prevalence of a spirit of profaneness and enmity against serious godliness and practical religion, has turned the bent that way, 2 Thess. ii. 11, 12. When men are set on their lusts, to follow them at any rate, they must seek a shelter under which they may most peaceably enjoy them; hence these principles are greedily drunk up in the generation. The inundation of profaneness makes such a flood, as throws down before it the foundation principles of religion standing in their way.

(2.) The obscuring of, and flinching from the doctrine of Christ crucified, his righteousness and grace, has made the progress of such principles more easy. The manifestation of the mystery of Christ to the world, is the great divine ordinance for its reformation. This the apostles used among Jews and Pagans, and therewith succeeded, 1 Cor. i. 23, 24; Eph. iii. 8; Acts xvii. 18. The Pagan moralists advanced fine reasonings without this; but they could not prevail. Yet at this day, not the former, but the latter method is most insisted on; as if men were more apt to be made religious by force of reason, than by discovering to them the righteousness and grace of Christ. But that method will be found but a betraying of the cause of religion; as lamentable experience this day declares.

(3.) The growth of such principles is a sad prognosticate of some uncommon stroke abiding the generation. There is no mention of Sadducees in the Old Testament; but they swarmed among the Jews in the time of our Saviour and his apostles. And on the back of that, that nation got such a ruinating stroke, as they never before met with. And the Sadduceism of this day, and daring strokes at the root of Christianity, are terrible signs foreboding some uncommon stroke.

2. The bold and curious intruders into the divine secrets, to reach a certainty of that, which God will have uncertain as to us. God will have us uncertain, whether we shall live long, or short while, when we shall remove. How dangerous must it be then to use unlawful arts for the discovery of these; and consult fortune-tellers on these or the like future events? Deut. xxix. ult. What good use can be made of such pretended discoveries? If one is answered according to his wish, he is ready to be turned secure, and carried off depending on providence, and disappointed at length. If other-

wise, what a snare and rack do people bring themselves into by that means.

3. The secure and careless, who are at no pains to make ready; but live as if they were never to remove hence. This is the prevailing temper of the world, Matt. xxiv. 38, 39. "For as in the days that were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." It is a world of sloth, wherein most men consider little of the world to come. Solomon sends such to the ant, to learn a lesson of foresight and provident care, Prov. vi. 6—11. "Go to the ant, thou sluggard, consider her ways, and be wise; which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer, and gathered her food in the harvest. How long wilt thou sleep?" &c. Men make ready for tomorrow in this world, for days and years to come in it, which oft-times they never see; but slight the most necessary preparation for the other world.

USE ult. Of exhortation. Let us then be exhorted and stirred up so to prepare for our removal into the other world, as to be always ready for it. I shall branch out this into three particulars natively arising from the text, viz.

1. Make ready for our removal.
2. Delay not to make ready.
3. Having made ready, keep ready.

FIRST, Make ready for your removal into the other world. Since it is so certain that we must all remove, and uncertain when, we must sound the alarm to all to make ready for it. Therefore awake and bestir yourselves to put matters in order for the removal. Here I shall,

1. Suggest some motives to press you to make ready.
2. Consider the impediments of people's making ready, to be removed out of the way.
3. Give directions or advices for making ready.

First, I am to offer some motives to press you to make ready. Consider,

1. Our removal is certain, there is no escaping of it, Psal. lxxxix. 48. "What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death? shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave?" There is a time appointed for our removal precisely; and when that time comes, ready or unready, we must go; the grim messenger will not wait, Eccl. viii. 8. "There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit," &c. Sometimes people sit at home, because they are not ready to go away when they are called, or the caller will

wait till they make themselves ready. But when the hour appointed for our removal comes, the messenger death will neither wait till we be ready, nor go away without us.

2. We are all naturally unready for that removal, quite unready and unfit for it. For, (1.) We want a title to heaven, the place of happiness in the other world, and are bound over to hell the place of misery there, by the curse of the broken law, Gal. iii. 10. Eph. ii. 3. How can we venture into that world in this case? We have the breaking of that bond of wrath to seek, and getting of that title to heaven constituted. Till this be done, we are utterly unready. (2.) We are nowise meet for heaven, but meet for the pit of destruction, being yet in our sins. How can the natural man, that is yet under the guilt, dominion, and pollution of his sin, be ready for the King's palace, but his prison, in the other world?

3. Our eternal state in the other world depends on what readiness we are in for removing to it, Eccl. xi. 3. "If the tree fall toward the south, or toward the north; in the place where the tree falleth there it shall be." They that are made ready for heaven, will be received into it; they that are not, will find the gates thereof shut on them, Mat. xxv. 10. And without there is outer darkness, weeping, and gnashing of teeth, chap. xxii. 13. Since such a weight hangs on our being ready, what unaccountable folly is it not to make ready?

4. There is no making ready there, Eccl. ix. 10. "For there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest." Men may go from home in no fit condition to appear and shew themselves in a strange place; but they may get themselves fitted out there where they are going; but it is not so in this case. There is no buying of oil more for the lamps, when once the Bridegroom is come. If death strip us not of the body of the sins of the flesh, which it certainly will not do, if we are not begun before to put off the old man; it will go with us into the other world, and hang about us for ever, Prov. xiv. 32. "The wicked is driven away in his wickedness."

5. There is no coming back again, when once we are removed, Job xiv. 14, "If a man die, shall he live again?" Could we expect a return into this world, to mend what was amiss in our former removal; that if we were not ready the first time we went away, we should be sure to make ready the next time; the matter would be the less. But it is not so. The removal out of this world that we *must* make, is never to return. Sure that is a loud call to make ready for it.

6. The nature of the removal requires a making ready for it.

We make many removes in this world that are so insignificant, that they require no preperation for them; but in the meantime, we make some, that it would be unaccountable not to make ready for them. Much more is it so in this case: for it is,

(1.) A going a great journey, Psal. xxxix. ult. "O spare me, that I may recover strength, before I go hence, and be no more." Eccl. ix. 10. What rational man going out of the country or kingdom, though but for a time, will not be making ready for it beforehand? But what is going over the seas, in comparison of going through the valley of the shadow of death? What is going into other countries, compared with going into the other world? It is a long and dangerous journey; and nothing the less weighty, that it is common, being the way of all flesh, since it is a journey we will never come back over again. Wherefore make ready for this journey, make timely provision for it, take your way marks right, and secure a comfortable lodging there.

(2.) A going to a marriage, which you have been invited to, whether ye be wise or foolish virgins, Mat. xxv. The marriage is betwixt Christ and believers. In the gospel sinners are invited to it, and called to make ready for it in this world. In the other world that marriage is solemnized, and there is the eternal marriage-feast, beginning with the night of death's coming on; it is held in Christ's Father's house there, full of glorious light. But without is nothing but darkness. Death is the going away to it; what time they that are ready are taken into the marriage-house, they that are not ready are barred out in outer darkness. Wherefore make ready for this marriage, on which depends your making or undoing for ever more, Rev. xix. 7.

(3.) A going to a judgment-seat, even the tribunal of the Judge of all, Heb. ix. 27. "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." We are debtors to the divine justice, and must answer it. We cannot deny the debt, we are unable to pay, the longer it runs on, the more it increaseth; we must make ready, by employing the Advocate, making the Judge our friend now, procuring the discharge of the debt to be produced there; or we must go to the prison, Mat. v. 25. We are criminals, and there must receive the sentence of death, if we get not now a remission to produce against the indictment, and so be ready.

7. The pains of making ready will be fully compensated with the fruit of it, Mat. xxv. 10. "They that were ready, went in with him to the marriage." ver. 21. "His Lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things; enter thou

into the joy of thy lord." The joys of the heavenly marriage-feast will more than compensate all the painful work of making ready for it. To make sinners meet for heaven, they are to be wrought and hewed with various trials and struggles; right eyes to be plucked out, and right hands to be cut off; but there is no reason to stick at that, 1 Cor. xv. ult. "Forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

Lastly, It will be dear bought ease, that is got by shifting to make ready, Prov. vi. 10, 11. "Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep. So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man." That spiritual sleep and carnal ease will make way for everlasting disquiet and unrest. They who will needs rest now when they should wake and act for eternity, must be deprived of the eternal rest in the other world, Prov. xx. 4. "The sluggard will not plough by reason of the cold; therefore shall he beg in harvest, and have nothing."

Secondly, I come to consider the impediments of people's making ready for the other world, to be removed out of the way. These I take to be these four chiefly.

1. A vanity of mind, by means whereof men can never be brought from fleeting in the vain things of a present life, to serious thoughts of their removal into the other world. They see others about them carried off, time after time; but it can make no solid lasting impression on them, more than if they were immortal; the vanity of their minds suffers them not to bring it home to themselves, but still they look on the other world as a thing foreign to them.

O lay aside this, if ever ye would be ready, Eph. iv. 17. "This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind." And act like rational men, seriously laying your account with a certain removal of yourselves into the other world, uncertain at what time, Prov. xxiii. 3. "A prudent man forseeth the evil, and hideth himself."

2. A heart throng of business of this life, whereby no room is left for thoughts of a removal into the other world; as was the case of the old world before the deluge, and of the sinners in Sodom before their utter overthrow, Luke xvii. 26—29. Martha's business hinders Mary's; they are so plunged into the many things, that the one thing needful is justled out. While this and the other thing is to be done for the body, the soul's case is left a bleeding, and neglected.

But O! why not the main care for the main thing? Ye may see to your necessary business, and your business for the other world

too; but why should the former enhance your whole time? Nay, the latter ye ought to do, in the first place, though not leave the other undone.

2. An averseness to think of the other world and a removal thereto, whereby it comes to pass that these thoughts are shifted, till they force in themselves by death at the door. This averseness riseth from conscience of guilt, and prevailing carnality; and staves off serious thoughts.

But to what purpose is it to stave off thoughts of that which will ceriainly be in on us at length? were it not our wisdom to do like that king, Luke xiv. 31, 32, who "going to make war against another king, sitteth down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace." Set yourselves then to conquer that averseness, and drive over the belly of it; getting your hearts, by application of the Redeemer's blood, sprinkled from an evil conscience; and that will break your carnality.

4. Slight thoughts of what is necessary in order to preparation for the other world, whereby men imagine that they may do that time enough when there is any appearance of their removal. By this means it comes to be put off from time to time, till often in the issue it is out of time.

But did men seriously consider the matter, what necessity there is of a change of their state, for habitual readiness; what necessity of a gracious orderly frame, for their actual readiness; they would not look on it so slightly; but see it a matter of the greatest weight, not to be easily compassed, and therefore to be set to timely.

Thirdly, I shall now give you some directions or advices for making ready.

1. While you are yet in health, set yourselves solemnly to take hold of Christ Jesus in the covenant, for death and eternity. In this lies your security for the other world, whereof he is Lord; and it is little enough to do it with an express view to the other world and your removal. And it is best preparing for sickness and death, when one is in health; for it is hard to say, what one may he capable of doing that way, when he comes to a death-bed. But let men toss and wrestle as they will with their sickness unto death; it will always be well with them that saw to their soul's concern while they were in health, and have not their main business to do, when death is come to the door; while it would be too much rashness to venture our souls in their soul's stead, who after having spent the time of

health carelessly and irregiously, begin in their sickness unto death to shew a mighty seriousness and concern about the other world.

For the right managing of this work, be advised,

(1.) To set apart some time for it, more or less by day or by night, as your circumstances will allow; so will ye get the business for the other world done in health in your chamber, out-house, or field, with more ease and deliberation than in sickness upon a bed. Tenants will take some time off their ordinary business to go and take their land for another year; servants, to go and hire themselves into another family; and so others in other cases; and will people not go a little off their ordinary course of devotion, to make ready for the other world?

(1.) Begin the work with prayer to God, and then sit down and consider and open out your whole life, in its several periods, before the Lord; beginning with your conception and birth in sin, proceeding to take a view of the sins of your childhood, youth, &c. And deal impartially with yourselves, in searching out your sins. And when ye have searched out and reproached yourself with all that you can find, know that there are multitudes which have escaped your notice, Psalm xix. 12. "Who can understand his errors?" And then view the curse of the law justly due to you on these accounts, and thereupon take a view of the remedy in Christ.

(3.) Then go to God in prayer, and confess before him accordingly, what you were in your birth, what you have been in your life, and what you deserve to be made in the other world. Go through the several periods of your life in your confession, and lay out before him the particulars, wherewith conscience charges you. This is the way to vomit up the sweet morsel; and why should we hide, or stick to confess our sins particularly, since we must all answer before the tribunal of God? Having thus confessed your sins, confess your desert of hell and wrath for them, and condemn yourselves; yet looking to God in Christ for mercy and pardon, 1 Cor. xi. 31. "If we would judge ourselves, we should not he judged."

(4.) This done, consider the covenant offered you in Christ in the gospel, with the perfect righteousness, full remission, and right to eternal life, held out to you therein. Examine yourselves as to your believing it, and your willingness to enter personally into it, and to venture your salvation on that bottom; and to take Christ in all his offices; to resign yourselves to him as your Head and Husband, to be his only, wholly, and for ever.

(5.) Then go to prayer, and solemnly in express words from the heart, take hold of the covenant, believing, and resting your souls on Christ in it, with an express view to death and eternity; give

consent to him in the gospel-offer; taking him in all his offices; resigning yourselves to him for time and eternity. And ye that can write, may, for your comfort and establishment, write this your acceptance of the covenant, and subscribe it with your hand, Isa. xliv. 5. "One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel*."

Lastly, After that you may address yourselves to God as your covenanted God, laying before him particular petitions relative to your removal into the other world, your reception into heaven, and the happy resurrection of your body at the last day.

Such a time well spent, would be the best spent time of all your life; and this course sincerely followed, ye would be ready for the other world, come the removal when, and in what manner it will, so that ye might say with David, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. "Although my house be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure," &c.

2. Put your worldly affairs in order, for your removal; such of you as have any occasion that way. Be precisely just and upright in the course of your dealings with men, that you may have nothing to leave that is not well come, as ye would not leave a moth or a curse in it. Accommodate your way of living unto your ability, and go not beyond it. One had better live scrimply upon what is his own, than plentifully on what is another's. Keep your business as far as possible from a state of perplexity and confusion, by stating and keeping your accounts clear. And one's testament lying by him, would not in the least make him either sick or sore; but it would be a great ease when sickness or death comes, to think, that part of one's work is done already. And it would be no great toil, for them that can write, to alter it from time to time, as there is any notable alteration in their affairs.

SECONDLY, The next particular branch of exhortation, which I offer you as native from the text, is, Do not put off or delay to make ready for your removal into the other world; but immediately set about it, since it is quite uncertain at what time you may remove. To enforce this I offer the following motives:

1. God has allowed you time to make ready, but not one moment

* A form of personal covenanting may be seen in the author's Memorial concerning personal and family fasting and humiliation, annexed to his View of the Covenant of Grace. It appears from his Memoirs, that in the end of the year 1729, he entered into a solemn transaction of this nature, with an express view to his own removal into the other world, exactly following the directions here laid down.

to delay it, 2 Cor. vi. 3. "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold now is the day of salvation." Heb. iii. 15. "To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." All the time you have had, since you came to the years of discretion, has been allowed you to make ready; so that if you should now be removed unready for it, ye will not have it to say, that ye had no time for it. Perhaps it did not come in your head to make ready for the other world, having been so short while in this. But whose fault is that? However, should you put it off but till to-morrow, ye do it at your peril without God's allowance.

2. One hour's delay may be an eternal loss, yea one minute's: for this hour, this minute, you may be removed into the other world. And where then is the next hour, or minute, which you put it off to? Why will men thus let slip the time they have, and trust to a time they have not, and perhaps never shall have? What a venture on eternity upon an uncertainty? Should one cast away in a water, put off till the next minute his taking hold of the rope; we would reckon him a self-destroyer, because ere the next minute he may be in the bottom.

3. Though ye get the time ye put off unto, how are ye sure of grace to help you to improve it? Though the ship be not gone off, the wind may be fallen, and the tide gone; that is an awful word, that may justly strike with trembling, Luke xiv. 24. "I say unto you that none of those men which were bidden, shall taste of my supper." Indeed delayers to make ready seem to imagine, that it is in their own hand to put themselves in readiness, when they think good. But, alas! they deceive themselves, 2 Cor. iii. 5. Common experience shews, that when such a time comes, men are as ready for a new delay as ever.

4. The longer ye delay, ye make the work of making ready the more hard, Jer. xiii. 23. "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil." It is like the mending of a dam: take it in time, it will be the easier; but to put it off, the breach grows wider, and will cost far more labour. Alas! it often fares with our souls in this case as with bodily diseases, which if taken timely might be carried off; but at length they grow so inveterate, being neglected, that they spurn all remedy.

Lastly, So far as ye delay, ye are unfaithful and cruel to your own souls, leaving them for the time in hazard of perishing. If ye had a child fallen into the fire or the water, would you delay to pull him out? Thy soul is fallen into a gulf of sin and misery under the curse, and is every moment in hazard, of falling down to the

bottom; why do ye put off? why do ye not presently set yourselves to make ready?

Here I am aware of several objections, which I must answer.

Object. 1. I am but young yet; what needs so soon making ready for the other world?

Ans. 1. And may ye not die young? Are there not in the churchyard, such as have died in childhood? are there not boys and girls in their graves there, young men and maids, men and women in their prime? I suspect, that, on a just calculation, there would be found far more such than those of grey hairs. Therefore delay not to make ready though young.

2. To whom should your youth and strength be devoted, to God your Maker, or the vain world? Whatever extravagant notions obtain among the young with respect to this, I defy them to get a footing for them, but in their vain imaginations, not to be supported but by overlooking God and their Bibles, which lay them under a necessity of solid seriousness, strict walking, and making ready, as well as others. Are they excepted in the divine precepts, and calls to these things; or in the threatenings, in case of neglect? No; Psal. cxlviii. 12, 13. "Both young men and maidens, old men and children, Let them praise the name of the Lord; for his name alone excellent, his glory is above the earth and heaven." *i. e.* Let them praise and serve him with the vigour of youth, and not spend it on the vain world; it is God's gift, let them not sacrilegicusly rob him of the use of it, but seriously consider that caution, Eccl. xi. 9, 10. "Rejoice, O young man in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thy heart, and in the sight of thine eyes; but know thou that for all these things God shall bring thee into judgment. Therefore remove sorrow from thy heart, and put away evil from thy flesh; for childhood and youth are vanity."

3. It is a rare thing to find such as are bred up under the gospel, and spend their youth without making ready, to get grace to make ready after, Job xx. 11. "His bones are full of the sin of his youth, which shall lie down with him in the dust." It is an ordinary thing in a vain world, for the young to think with great reason to stave off the seriousness of religion, till once they be married at least. But it is a just and awful observe, that they who living under the gospel vainly and carelessly before, are rarely converted after they are married, but are a step farther back from Christ. It is founded on Luke xiv. 20. "Another said, I have married a wife; and therefore I cannot come." And to confirm it do but observe how many there are who in their youth and single life gave hopeful

signs, wither away when once dipt in the cares of a family. But in case that grace do reach you after that time, ye will readily find it a saving so as by fire, being broken and bruised in your entry to it, at another rate than you might have been before.

Lastly, After all it is a base and disingenuous thing, to put off the answering of the gospel call and serious religion, till once ye are past your best. How think ye God will take that off your hand? Mal. i. 8. You will reserve the dregs of your time for God, and give the flower and cream of your days to the vain world. I beseech you imagine yourselves in these circumstances applying to God, and beginning to make ready; and let conscience guess what is likely to be your answer and success.

Object. 2. My hands are now so full of business that I cannot get opportunity to make ready; but if I were at the end of such and such a business, and freed from such entangling circumstances as I am now in, I would set myself to make ready.

Ans. 1. Is not your business for the other world your main business? Though your other business should go never so well, if that be marred ye are ruined, so as nothing will make up your loss, Matth. xvi. 26. If that were once right, let your affairs in the world be never so unsuccessful, it cannot make you unhappy. How then can ye reasonably put it off longer?

2. Take heed that the business that mars you to-day from your great work, be not succeeded to-morrow with a business that will mar you more. It is ordinary, that he who puts off his great work, to a fitter time than the present, when the time comes he set, it is found less fit than the former. The case of Felix may be a warning here, Acts xxiv. 25.

Lastly, That is at best a great and hazardous venture. Death comes in on men in the midst of business without ceremony, however lothe they may be to break it off to prepare for death, Ps. cxlvi. 4. "His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish," Luke xii. 20. Wherefore let no circumstances, however perplexed and entangled, move you to delay.

Object. ult. It is time enough to make ready when one comes to a death-bed.

Ans. 1. That is a manifest contempt of God, and of the other world. What? Is the matter of the other world such a trifling thing, as to delay making ready for it, till ye be able no more to pursue the things of this life? Is it so small a matter in your eyes, to obtain the favour of God, and a reception into his family above? You will certainly change these thoughts.

2. Ye may possibly get no death-bed, but may in an instant drop

out of this, into the other world. Death sends not always messengers before, to warn of its approach; many a man in health has by some providential incident been suddenly dispatched into the other world. And delayers have ground to fear it will be their lot in a special manner, as ye may see, Matt. xxiv. 48—51.

3. Though ye get a death-bed, ye may be rendered incapable of making ready, by the nature of your disease. Though ye be capable, you may get enough ado even to die, through a vehement toss of sickness. If there was one thief on the cross that got repentance, there was another that died hardened; and this is most likely to be your case who so delay.

Lastly, Death-bed repentance is seldom sincere. What is recorded of the Israelites in the wilderness may well have weight here, Ps. lxxviii. 34—36. "When he slew them, then they sought him; and they returned and inquired early after God. And they remembered that God was their rock, and the high God their Redeemer. Nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongues." The terrors of death may make a mighty concern about the other world in a graceless heart; but what sincerity there is for the most part in these things, may be learned from the case of such brought to the gates of death, who after all turn just back to their old bias.

THIRDLY and LASTLY, The last thing upon this use of exhortation is, Having made ready, keep ready. Your interest as well as duty is concerned in this. Therefore take the following directions.

1. Keep grace in exercise, Luke xii. 35. "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning. Slumbering virgins, though wise, are not ready to meet the Bridegroom. Let faith be awake, love kept warm, desires astir, &c. And labour to be spiritual in all religious performances.

2. Beware of dipping deep again in this once forsaken world; of being drowned in its pleasures, racked with its cares, glued to its profits, lifted up with its smiles, or sunk with its frowns, 1 Cor. vii. 29—31. "This I say, brethren, the time is short. It remaineth, that both they that have wives, be as though they had none; and they that weep, as though they wept not." &c.

3. Be careful to keep a clean conscience, as Paul, Acts xxiv. 16. "Herein," says he, "do I exercise myself to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men." Have you got on your wedding garment? keep it unstained as far as may be; and what spots are daily contracted, be daily washing out, John xiii. 10.

4. Be always busy in your generation work, for the honour of God,

and the good of others, as ye have access; that the Master coming find you not idle, Luke xii. 43. "Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh, shall find so doing."

Lastly, Live in expectation of the better world, and your removal into it Job, xiv. 14. "All the days of my appointed time will I wait till my change come." 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8. "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith, Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give at that day; and not to me only but unto all them also that love his appearing." Look for the day of your removal, as a day that will be your redemption-day, your marriage-day, your home going day, the day bettter than that of your birth.

Upon the whole that has been said touching the other world, I make these two concluding reflections,

1. We will all at length be in that world, of which we have so long had the report; and we will see in it what we have heard about it, however foreign it appears to us now. Some of our brethren and sisters have been carried off into it in the time that we have been on this subject; and certainly it is not for nought that it has so long sounded in our ears.

2. However we may now lightly pass, and make very little reflection on what has been said thereon: I doubt not, we will all have our reflections upon it, when we come there; particularly, whether we land in the upper or lower part of it, looking back on what we have heard of it, we will have this reflection, That the half has not been told. What others we will there have, the day will declare.

THE PECULIAR ADVANTAGE AND BUSINESS OF LIFE OPENED UP, AND APPLIED.

Several Sermons, preached at Ettrick, in the year 1727.

Isaiah xxxviii. 19.

The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day: the father to the children shall make known thy truth.

It is much to be desired, that men would consider the great business of their life: but few do it, till it is just going or gone out

of their hands. Hezekiah had been at the brink of the grave, and learned those just thoughts of life, which he gives us with much concern in the text. Wherein we have,

1. The mercy of life: "The living, the living, he shall praise thee," &c. Ver. 18. He had been speaking of the dead, the inhabitants of the gloomy mansions of the grave; and in opposition to these he here speaks of the living, and in a triumphant manner proposeth to speak of them, as seeing the mercy of life. A serious view of death is the way to get just thoughts of the mercy of life.

2. Wherein the mercy of life, the peculiar mercy of it, consists. And the decision of this is in a vein of thought peculiar to the spiritual man, in a spiritual frame.

1*st*, Ask the carnal man, where lies the mercy of life? And,

(1.) If he is in prosperity, with health and wealth, he reckons the mercy of life lies, in that the living man may enjoy the pleasures of sense, mirth, and jollity, and may lay up wealth for him and his; all which stern death robs a man of. But there is not one word of this here.

(2.) If he is in adversity, poverty, and sore sickness, he either cannot see the mercy of life at all, but thinks they are well that are away, that are out of poverty and pain, and lie at ease in the dust. So crosses make him wish to be away. At best, he reckons it the mercy of life, that he is not there where it may be he would be worse, viz. in hell. But there is not a word of all this neither, in the text.

2*dly*, Ask the renewed man in an ill frame of spirit, where lies the mercy of life? If he is in outward prosperity, he will be ready to reckon it lies in the comforts of this life. If he is in adversity, the troubles of life are so great, that the mercy of it is small in his view; only heaven bulks in his eyes, and that as a place of rest from trouble. But there is nothing of this neither in the text.

The decision is, The mercy of life lies in the business of life, to wit, being serviceable for God in the world: "The living, the living, he shall praise thee," &c. Hezekiah counts that the great mercy of life, to have access to be useful for God in the world. Which speaks, (1.) A high esteem of God and his service, as men count it a favour to be allowed to serve their prince. (2.) An ardent love to him, as men delight to serve the interests of those they dearly love. This will be to a spiritual man in a spiritual frame the most desirable thing in life: Philip. i. 20, 21. "According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death.

For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." This is a just endearment of life. Now, the business of life, for which it is desirable, is twofold.

1. To praise or glorify God in the world; to speak of the perfections of his nature, and shew forth the praises of him who hath called us, among men, to the advancement of his kingdom here; the sun to strike up beams of his glory in a dark world, and commend him and his way before and to others. Now, here consider,

1*st*, Whose is this privilege: "The living, the living;" *i. e.* the living all along in a succession of generations to the end of the world. That is the import of the doubling of this word. This access to the praising of God in the world, is peculiar to the living. And,

(1.) It is not those that are now dead, but those that are now living, that have access to shew forth his praise and glorify him, in a world where he is so much dishonoured; to side with him, and take his part against his enemies. It is true, the souls of dead saints are praising God in heaven in the holiest strains: but what the better is the world of these praises? No more than they that are sitting in the dark room down stairs, are the better of a glorious lamp shinning in the upper room. Is there ever a poor sinner brought acquainted and to fall in love with Christ by their means? No; their praises of God are to sinners here as if they were not; they hear them not. Is the kingdom of Christ in the world advanced by these praises? No. It is the living, the living only, that have access to those pieces of service to God. The living man that sits in a cote-house, has the access to glorify God in the world that no saint in heaven has.

(2.) If those that are now living were once dead, they will have no more access to praise him in the world; but those that will be then living: and so on to the end. Men will go off the stage one after another, but they will not carry that work with them; but it will still be left in the hands of the living, and no other, whetever they make of it. There are heads, tongues, and hands of ministers and Christians lying in the grave, that have contrived, spoken, and acted well for God in the world: but now, if the cause of God and religion, which is very low, were at the last gasp, there is no more help to be had from those heads, tongues, and hands. The living only must speak and act for it, or it must lie.

2*dly*, An instance of it: "As I do this day." Hezekiah was recovered from sickness, and he gives God the praise of it. He looked on it as his bounden duty to fall closely again to that business of life, which was likely to have been taken out of his hands

by death. What time of life the Lord lengthens out to us, after threatening a removal, we should be careful to use for the honour of God.

2. To propagate his name and praise: "The father to the children shall make known thy truth." It is the special business of life, to endeavour that the name of God may live and be glorified in the world, when we are dead. It is a black mark for persons not to care what come of the world if they were out of it. A child of God will be concerned, that religion may be kept up and propagated in it: and while he is living, he has access to contribute to it. And here consider,

1*st*, What he has access to do for that end; namely, to praise God to the younger sort, that are likely to live after he is gone; especially to his own family, and particularly his own children. Heb. "The father to the children;" *q. d.* The father [shall praise thee] to the children. They may shew to them how lovely God is, and how desirable his way: and when they have children, they may do the same to them; and so on, God's praise will be kept up in the world.

Now observe, he is still speaking of the living, for these are the the subject expressly proposed to be spoken of. *q. d.* As for the living, the living father may praise thee to the living sons. It imports,

(1.) If the father die, though the children live, he can do God no more honour, and them no more service, that way. If he has neglected his duty to his family in his life, he cannot come back again to mend the matter. If he left them ignorant of God, and strangers to him, though one word from him again could save their souls from the pit, he has no more access to give them it.

(2.) If the children die, though the father live, he can do God no more honour, and them no more service, that way. He may take care of their dust, to bury it; but he can do no more for their souls: "As the tree falls it must lie." While they are both standing and living together, he has access to serve their souls: but when one of them falls, that work is at an end.

2*dly*, How he may do it, how he may commend him to them; namely, by making him known to them, as an object worthy of their faith, trust, and confidence: "Shall make known thy truth." The expression in the Hebrew is concise, He may make known, unto thy truth. The word rendered to hope, ver. 18. properly signifying intensely to look, Neh. ii. 13, 15. is understood. *q. d.* That they may look unto thy truth or faithfulness. So in it are two things to be consdered,

(1.) The proper method of praising or commending God to the

rising generation; and that is, by making him known. The more he is known, the more lovely will he appear. "God is light." The best way to commend the sun to one sitting in a dark room, is to open the windows, and let in its light, and bid him look to it with his eyes: The best way to commend God and religion to the generation rising, is to labour that they may know and understand them, by teaching.

(2.) The great thing we are to have in view in that work. It is, that they may look intensely unto his truth; that they may look away from the lies and vanities the world is holding out to them, to be embraced as their portion: and that they may look unto the truth of God in Christ, in the promise of the gospel, by an eye of faith, trust and confidence, fixed on it, and hold by that as their portion, their *sure* portion.

This is what men do for the rising generation, and the view they should do it on: but God only can give it efficacy. No doubt Hezekiah did as he said, commended God, and made him known to Manasseh his son: but how unsuccessful all he did that way was, is notour from the wicked life his son led. Yet Hezekiah's work was accepted, and his prayers heard in the end: and perhaps his words were minded too, in Manasseh's conversion at long-run.

Three doctrines are deducible from the words.

Doct. I. It is the peculiar mercy of life, that the living only are, and all along will be, those that have access to praise and glorify God in the world.

Doct. II. It is the special buisness and privilege of life, to propagate religion, God's name and praise, the standing generation to the rising generation, the fathers to the children, all along.

Doct. III. The true way of propagating religion, the standing to the rising generation, is, That the former made God known to the latter, so as they may betake themselves unto him, his truth and faithfulness, by faith and trust.

We shall handle each of these doctrines in order.

Doct. I. It is the peculiar mercy of life, that the living only are, and all along will be, those that have access to praise and glorify God in the world.

In prosecuting this doctrine, we shall,

I. Consider the praising or glorifying God in the world.

II. Shew how it is a valuable mercy and privilege of the living, that they have access to praise God in the world.

III. How this access to praise God in the world, is and will be the peculiar mercy of the living.

IV. *Lastly*, Apply.

I. We shall consider "the praising or glorifying God in the world." And here we shall shew,

1. What praising of God is.

2. What are the peculiarities of the praises of the living.

First, What praising of God is. It is the acknowledging and declaring of the glorious excellencies of God, as he has manifested himself in his word and works; and imports,

1. The belief of the being of God, Heb. ix. 6. "He that cometh to God, must believe that he is." Atheism wholly cuts off the praises of God; for who can praise that which he does not believe to be? The works of creation and providence proclaim his being; but such is the natural enmity of man against God, and his addictedness to his lusts, that he secretly wisheth there were not a God, and so is disposed to believe so, if he could get any footing for it: Psalm xiv. 1. "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God:" and that is at the root of men's living to a contrary end to his praise, Tit. i. ult. "They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate."

2. The knowledge of God. To whom he is an unknown God, he will be an unpraised God. Hence ignorance is ruining: Hos. iv. 6. "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." Is. xxvii. 11. "It is a people of no understanding; therefore he that made them, will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them will show them no favour." To live to the praising of God, requires,

1*st*, The knowledge of who he is, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, one God, 1 John v. 7. In the name of the three persons we are baptized by divine appointment: if we know him not so, we know not the God to whom we are engaged in baptism; and so cannot praise him.

2*dly*, The knowledge of what he is; the discerning of his glorious perfections, which are the matter of his praise. We must know him to be the greatest and best of beings, infinite eternal, and unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth; more excellent than any creatures, or all of them together, as being the fountain of all excellency in them.

3*dly*, The knowledge of what he has done. His works are glorious, creation, providence, and redemption. By them he shows what he is, Psal. xix. 1. "The heavens declare the glory of God: and the firmament showeth his handiwork," and affords us matter of praise: and we are to think on them for that end, that we may from thence praise him, Psal. cxi. 2. "The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein." And it is

highly offensive not to regard them: Psal. xxvii. 5. "Because they regard not the works of the Lord, nor the operation of his hands, he shall destroy them, and not build them up." That is to deny him his praise.

3. The love of God. Love is the mother of praise, and natively brings it forth. They that do not love God, can never kindly or acceptably praise him. 1 John iv. 16. "God is love," not only subjectively, infinitely loving; but objectively, wholly lovely. And so he is in the eyes of all who live to his praise. To them the Father is lovely, the Son lovely, the Holy Spirit lovely. Every attribute of God is lovely. The holiness and purity of his nature, the great eyesore of carnal men, is most lovely to them: Exod. xv. 11. "Who is like unto thee, O Lord, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders? Psal. xxx. 4. "Sing unto the Lord, O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness." His works are lovely. The creation of the world is a lovely work, the guiding of it by providence a lovely work; but the most lovely is the redemption of the world by the blood of Christ.

4. The admiration of God; which is, love and esteem raised to a high pitch. This is the nearest cause of praise; for it is the heart swelling with the admiration of the object, that bursts forth in praises, Exod. xv. 11. above cited. They that live to God's praise, are admirers of him: they see all excellencies in him to be transcendant, nothing comparable to them in the whole creation, and believe there are infinite treasures of excellency in him, which they cannot comprehend. So their heart saith, with the Psalmist, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee, Psal. lxxiii. 25. Launching into the ocean of the glories of his nature and works, they see it shoreless: Psal. cvi. 2. "Who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord? who can shew forth all his praise?

5. *Lastly*, The expressing that love to, and admiration of him: Exod. xv. 11. forecited. Micah. vii. 18. "Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy." This is it in which the essence of praising God consists, and is the great end for which man was made: and it is the native becoming return the creature is to make to its Creator, from whom it has received all, and to whom it can give nothing, but only commend him, and set forth his glory. And this not being confined to words, is twofold.

1*st*, Vocal, by words. It is called "the calves of our lips," Hos. xiii. 15. Man's tongue is called his glory, Psal. xvi. 9. as being a

prime instrument wherewith he is furnished for praising and glorifying God. And thus we are to praise him, solemnly and statedly, in the duties of worship, singing his praises; and occasionally, in speaking to his praise, as we have occasion offered.

2dly, Real, by deeds or actions, though it be not accompanied with words: for as there is a practical atheism, Tit. i. ult.; so there is a practical praising or glorifying God. And this is the main thing in that praise which is the end of life, without which vocal praise avails not. It is twofold.

(1.) In the heart: 1 Cor. vi. 20. "Ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God—in your spirit, which is God's." Men's praise of men from the teeth outward may pass, but God knows the heart; and if the heart harmonize not with the tongue, it cannot be accepted of him, Is. xxix. 13. He must be praised in our understanding, thinking and esteeming him above all, Psal. lxxiii. 25.; in our will, chusing him above all, for our portion, Psal. cxlii. 5.; and in our affections, loving, rejoicing, and delighting in him above all, Psal. xxxvii. 4.

(2.) In life and conversation: Matth. v. 16. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your father which is in heaven." A holy life is a shining light, to let a blind world see the glory of God: for as God has expressed his nature in his word, so his word is expressed again in a holy life, Philip. ii. 15. 16. The study of holiness says "God is holy;" mourning for every sin proclaims him spotless; and horror of secret, as well as of open sins, is a testimony to his omnipresence and omniscience.

Secondly, What are the peculiarities of the praises of the living? The praises of the living saints have these peculiarities, which the dead have no access to.

1. They are the praises of the whole man, in soul and body too: 1 Cor. vi. 20. "Ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." Those of the dead are of their souls only; but the living have access to praise God, soul and body in concert. Even the clay body hath, for the time of life, access to join in this honourable work: but death breaks it in pieces, that it can no more bear a part in God's praise.

2. They are praises which may spread among the living, as in their land, from whence the dead are cut off, Col. iii. 16. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." The voice of the praise of living saints, may be heard under this vault of the heaven

but the praises above, as high a strain as they are in, reach not hither, to this our native earth.

3. They are praises raised by the way to the heavenly kingdom, which the dead have no more access to join in. The living are upon the road, the dead are at their journey's end. There is a song of praise raised in the house of our pilgrimage, Psalm cxix. 54; but there is a deep silence in the grave. The wilderness-song is peculiar to the living.

4. They are praises of faith, not of sight; 2 Cor. v. 7, "For we walk by faith, not by sight." The saints in glory raise a song of praise to God, upon their seeing and enjoying; the living saints, upon their believing what their eye hath not seen, 1 Pet. i. 8. Praising of God on what one sees of him, is more comfortable to the party himself; but praising him, upon what one believes of him, if other circumstances be alike, is more to the honour of God; John xx. 29, "Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." Rom. iv. 20, 21, "Abraham staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God: and being fully persuaded, that what he had promised, he was able also to perform."

5. *Lastly*, They are praises to God amidst a deal of dishonours done to him. David takes notice of God's covering a table to him in the midst of his enemies, Psalm xxiii. 5; and God will take notice of praises given him in the midst of those that dishonour him; Rev. ii. 13, "I know thy works [written to the angel of the church in Pergamos], and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is; and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth. The saints in glory praise him, there being none to open a mouth to his dishonour: but living saints praise him, in the face of contradiction by a wicked world: Prov. xxviii. 4, "Such as keep the law, contend with the wicked."

II. The second general head is, to shew, How it is a valuable mercy and privilege of the living, that they have access to praise God in the world. The living should value this as their privilege,

1. In regard they might justly ere now have been put beyond all possibility of praising God at all; but might have been blaspheming in hell, through extreme anguish and despair; Lam. iii. 22, "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not." The rich man in hell, tormented in the flame, had no access to praise God; the burden of wrath lying on the

damned there, will hold down for ever their praises, and change them to howlings.

2. In regard of the honour thereby to be brought to God in the world; which in itself is most valuable, and therefore is man's chief end; 1 Cor. x. 31, "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." Compared with Psalm l. 23, "Whoso offereth praise, glorifieth me," He lives to good purpose, that lives to the honour of God; and he that doth not so live, doth at best but trifle away a life, never reaching the main end of it. Nothing should be so dear to us as God's honour; and therefore our all must be laid out on it as he calls for it, Luke xiv. 26. And it is the mercy of life, that we have access to honour him in the world.

3. In regard of the good to be thereby done to others. The view of this made Paul content to abide out of heaven for some time; as you may see, Philip. i. 23, 24. "I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: nevertheless, to abide in the flesh, is more needful for you." O what a satisfying thought must it be, to be instrumental towards the saving of a soul from hell, and bringing it to acquaintance with Christ! Nobody knows what a good word, or a good example, at a time may do: and to this the living have access only; but once dead, men can be no more serviceable to the world of mankind: Eccl. ix. 10.—"For there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest."

4. It is an honour to serve and honour God in the world. This makes a man truly worthy and honourable. The dignity of the master, and the work, reflects an honour on the servant that does it. Therefore says the Psalmist, Psal. lxxxiv. 10. "A day in thy courts is better than a thousand: I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness." And since no master is so honourable as God is, it must be then a peculiar honour to be serviceable to him, Heb. xi.

5. This is the only true balance of that meanness, misery, and trouble, that attends this life. Considering the spiritual original, make, and vast capacity of the soul of man; it will appear but a very mean thing to be taken up in eating, drinking, decking; yea, in building, planting, working, &c. on this cursed earth. From the seat of the blessed could we take our prospect, men so employed here would appear but as a company of emmets busy in a hillock. The troubles that attend this life are innumerable; and they fly about us, as the midges do on a hot summer-day. All which viewed by the soul, are apt to make a noble mind sick of this life, in its

best appearances; as a bird would be of the cage. The only balance for all this is, that in it there is access to praise God in the world. Hereby the meanest things are ennobled, and the hardest things softened, that God is to be honoured in these.

6. As men have access to praise God in this world, they have access to raise their reward in another world. Men think it a great matter to have access to raise an estate for themselves and theirs: but we have access, by our honouring of God in this world, to raise our reward in the other. For though the Lord doth not give eternal glory for our works, he gives it according to them: 2 Cor. ix. 6. "He which soweth sparingly, shall reap also sparingly: and he which soweth bountifully, shall reap also bountifully." And they that have shined here in usefulness most, will shine there in glory most: Dan. xii. 3. "They that be wise, shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever." Compared with 1 Cor. xv. 41. "There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory."

7. *Lastly*, The praising of God carries a reward in its bosom, to be enjoyed in time: Psal. xix. 11. "In keeping of them, [the judgments of the Lord] there is great reward." It is good, pleasant, and comely, Psal. cxlvii. 1. There is a secret satisfaction in one's having done his duty, endeavouring to live to the honour of God, 2 Cor. i. 12. And particularly it makes a pleasant reflection, when one is come to the end of his course: as in the case of Paul, 2 Tim. iv. 7. "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." Compared with what our Lord says, John xvii. 4. "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." And he that praiseth God to others, is himself partaker of the fruits.

III. The third general head is, to shew, How this access to praise God in the world, is, and will be the peculiar mercy of the living.

1. It is the peculiar mercy of us who are now living on the face of the earth; it is peculiar, I say, to us at this time. They who are yet unborn, can do nothing, since as yet they are not: they who are now dead, though yet they are in being, have no access more to praise God in this world, Psal. cxv. 17. There have been many generations on earth before us; and millions of men and women are gone by death from hence into another world, who sometimes had their turn of access to this praise: but now, though they are, yet not one of them all has access to join us in praising God.

2. In all time to come, to the end of the world, this privilege will

be confined to those who for the time shall be on the stage. There will be generations after us, as there have been before us; and the work will be devolved on the next generation for their time; with whom we, being gone off the stage, will have no more access to join, than those already dead have to join with us. And then they will go, and another rise up in their stead, and get the work put into their hands, none of the former to meddle with it: and so on to the end. The reasons are,

1*st*, There is no returning to this world when once gone. Death is a flitting for good and all, never to come back, Job vii. 9. 10. Job was sensible of this, Chap. x. 21. when he said,—"I go whence I shall not return, even to the land of darkness, and the shadow of death. We must praise him before we lie down in the grave, or never; for there is no rising out of it to that work, Psal. lxxxviii. 10. We cannot come back, and God will not bring us back.

2*dly*, The state and business of the two worlds are, by an unalterable purpose, made quite different. Here men are in a state of trial; there in a settled state for ever, according to their management in the trial. Here is the place of working at the command and for the honour of the master; there is the place of the reward of their works. If the sun should come back over from west to east, and so make night day too, the ordinance of heaven would be quite altered; so nobody expects it. As little is the access of any but the living, to praise God in the world, to be expected or looked for.

3*dly*, This world is under a peculiar mark of divine indignation, as defiled by sin, Gen. iii. 17; and should have been destroyed when it was first defiled, had not the Mediator interposed to keep up the tottering fabric for some time for the elect's sake, Is. xlix. 8. So men are hastened through it, as through a defiled place, and have an opportunity of praising God by the way. And therefore it cannot be expected, that ever that opportunity shall be repeated.

Lastly, When the dead shall live again, this world shall be destroyed, and be no more. As long as we shall lie in our graves, incapable to praise, this world will last: but when we shall live again at the resurrection, it shall be consumed by the general conflagration, and be no more. So there is no access to praise God in the world, but for those that now live, and those that shall live, to the end: Rev. xx. 12.—"The dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." Chap. xxi. 1. "And I saw a new heaven, and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away: and there was no more sea." In the new heavens and earth, no doubt God will be

praised, 2 Pet. iii. 13. but he will have no more praises here from the hand of any, when once they are gone off the stage, which will fall down under the last generation to be on it.

Use I. Of Information. Hence learn,

1. That the business of life is to honour God in the world. And if that be so, many have been many years in it, that have never yet fallen to their business, nay nor once seriously laid to heart what their business is. O hear the great Master saying to you, Matth. xx. 6. "Why stand ye here all the day idle?" and see how ye will answer that question. Ye are busy doing nothing, worse than nothing: but what have ye done, what are you doing, and what will ye do, for God? Ye are living; but what praise, what honour comes to God by your living? What more honour comes to God by your living, than ye would do him if ye were in the grave? I beseech you consider this, as ye will answer it to God, who hath said, Mal. i. 6. "A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear?

Object. 1. Some I fear will think, though not say, that they have other business to fill their heads and hands with, how to get a throughbearing in the world for them and theirs. *Ans.* Ah, is another world not worth your consideration? Or can ye think that ever ye shall enjoy God in that world, who are not careful to honour him here? Consider what the Lord says, 1 Sam. ii. 30.—"Them that honour me, I will honour: and they that despise me, shall be lightly esteemed." To spend all the time you live in wrestling with this world for a throughbearing, and after ye are dead to wrestle with the wrath of God for ever, is a sad tryst; better ye had never been born. Be concerned to honour God while ye live; and God will see to your provision while ye live, and make you happy after.

Object. 2. But I have no access to do any thing for the honour of God, in respect of my circumstances in the world: worldly business is by Providence laid to my hand for the business of my life.

Ans. 1. It is a common mistake in point of practice, that there are any who have no access to honour God in the world. Though some are placed in higher and more extensive spheres of activity for God, yet there is no station so low in the world, but it is a sphere wherein people may honour God, if they have a heart for it. This you may see verified in the parable of the talents, Matth. xxv. 14, 15. "The kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods: and unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and

to another one, to every man according to his several ability, and straightway took his journey." If one is in life, though never so low, according to the text, he may honour God. If one is a magistrate, or a church-officer, he has access to honour God among those over whom he is set. Though he be neither, if he is a person of weight and consideration in the place where he lives; as far as that weight goes, so far goes the sphere of his activity for God, which he is to fill up by honouring God. If he is a master of a family, there is a sphere of activity for God he is put in. If he is a single member of a family, he has a sphere of activity among other single members of it. To this purpose speaks the Apostle, 1 Cor. vii. 24. "Brethren, let every man wherein he is called, therein abide with God.

2. It is the honouring of God in our several stations that is the true honouring of him, 1 Cor. vii. 24. just now citied. That we cannot do for the honour of God what does not belong to our station, is so far from being our sin, that it would be a dishonouring of him to attempt it. The moon is useful to the world, though it shines not by day; the stars too, though they shine not so bright as the moon. The hands are useful to the body, though one does not walk on them; the feet, though one does not see with them, &c. Are you a child of a family? your business of life as such is to be an obedient, dutiful, pliable child: are you a servant? yours is to be a faithful, honest, dutiful servant. Whatever relation you stand in, ye are to honour God by a conscientious practise of the duties of your relation.

3. Whatever business God has laid to your hand, follow it as duty from God laid upon you; so ye will live to his honour. Hence is that exhortation of the apostle, Col. iii. 17. "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the father by him." And ver. 23, "Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord." Set about your business as commanded you of God, acting in it as under the eye of God, and looking to his word as your rule, and to the merit of Christ for God's acceptance of it. Whatever trials and sufferings the Lord lays on you, bear them patiently, because it is his will; and bear them for the sake of Christ that bear greater for us; and look for the acceptance of your bearing them through Christ. So shall the honouring of God be the business of your life whatever your circumstances are, high or low.

2. The business of honouring God in the world, formerly in the hands of the former generation, is now devolved on you. See what ye will do with it. To this purpose prophesies the Psalmist David,

Psal. cxlv, 4. "One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts." The former generation of the righteous, by keeping the law contended with the wicked, and maintained the honour of God in the world; they rowed against the stream of an ungodly crew, in the face of persecution, sinning, confining, banishment, violent death, till they fell by death holding up the standard for the honour of God: and then they gave it to you, saying, "The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day; the father to the children shall make known thy truth." On this I would say,

1*st*, Ye must answer for the standard now. If it go now while ye live, your life shall go for ever for it, though ye were left alone to hold it up: Psal. lx. 1. "Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee: that it may be displayed because of the truth." Mark viii. *ult.* "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels." Take heed then, there is a sacred trust committed into your hands; the generations of martyrs all along have conveyed it to you at the expence of their blood, it having been set up first at the expence of the blood of Christ.

2*dly*, Ye must either hold it up, or treacherously desert into the enemies camp, formed to dishonour God. Hence says our Lord, Matth. xii. 30. "He that is not with me, is against me: and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad." Many set up for neutralists; they go not into all excess with the openly profane, but they are as far from making it the business of their life to honour God. God will rank such with his enemies: Psal. cxxv. *ult.* "As for such as turn aside unto their crooked ways, the Lord shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity."

3*dly*, The saints of former generations will condemn you, as a spurious brood of treacherous men, that made so little account of what they wared their all on to transmit to you: 1 Cor. vi. 2. "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?" Ye do by your ungodly lives, dishonouring God, declare them fools: the day will come, that they will declare you fools, worthy to perish for ever, though ye have come out of their loins: Rev. xix 3. "And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever."

3. The business of honouring God in the world ye are to transmit to the succeeding generation, since it is the living, all along in a succession of generations to the end of the world, that have access to the praising of God. Hence says the Psalmist, Psal. lxxviii. 2, 3, 4. "I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of

old: which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children, shewing to the generation to come, the praises of the Lord; and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done." As ye have received the standard from the former, ye are to hand it down to the succeeding generation; that when ye are gone, instead of the fathers, there may be the children. See to it then, what ye do, that God may be honoured when ye are in the dust.

1*st*, It lies on every one of you to do for it something: Rom. xiv. 7. "For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself." Love to God and your neighbours binds it on you; and none of you can want occasion for it, while ye live among persons, some of whom may live after you; and have a tongue to speak, and hands to act.

2*dly*, If ye do it not, the honour of God is far from your heart. They that have nothing of God to communicate to others succeeding them, have nothing of God within themselves. Grace is a fire, and fire will go about to set on fire whatever is next it; so that if it do not burn, it is because it is not combustible. In the creation of plants, every tree was made with its seed in itself: so it is in the new creation of the trees of righteousness, John iv. 29.

3*dly*, If ye do it not, ye lay a stumbling block before the succeeding generation, which they may be ruined by. The generation of Jews in Christ's time rejecting the gospel, as they murdered Christ, they have murdered sixteen or seventeen generations of their offspring since. What will come of the succeeding generation that looks to you, that live not to the honour of God? When God calls for the standard for his honour at their hand, they will say, they never saw it; though that will not excuse them, it will aggravate your condemnation.

4. Know, that ye must honour God in the world now or never: Eccl. ix. 10. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest." Now is the accepted time, wherein ye may act for your own salvation; miss this time, and the door will be shut on you never to be opened again, Prov. i. 24, &c. Now is the working time for the honour of God, wherein ye may do something for God; miss it, and the occasion you will never more have. I would ask you,

1*st*, Does it concern you to honour God? or is it none of your business? If the Father created you, certainly ye are bound to live for his honour, Rom. xi. ult. If the Son redeemed you, there is a double tie on you to live for him who died for you, Philip. i. 21. If

the Holy Ghost has sanctified you, he has dedicated, fitted, and disposed you for it.

2dly, When will ye lay out yourself for it then? It is not a work to be done at any time, but confined to one time, the time of life. Hence said our Saviour, John ix. 4. "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work." Now the glass is set up to you: there is much of it run, as ye may see by looking to the lower end, the time ye have lived: the upper end ye cannot see, what time ye have yet to live; how soon it may run out then, ye know not. But it will never be turned for you. When the last sand runs out, the word is given, The master allows no more time for his work to you, Give account of your stewardship.

5. *Lastly*, Life is valuable, as giving access to honour God in the world. Hence says Hezekiah in the text and context, Is. xxxviii. 18, 19. "The grave cannot praise thee, death cannot celebrate thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth. The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day; the father to the children shall make known thy truth." There are many impressions of vanity on life. In itself by sin it is become a puff of wind, that passeth away; a vapour suddenly vanishing: it is like a post for swift passage, a dream for vanity, and a dunghill for vileness. It is the place of rendezvous for innumerable troubles and afflictions; and is a low station for an immortal soul, with much meanness about it. There are only two things which it is valuable for, viz. that there is access in it,

1st, To act for eternal salvation to ourselves, which the dead can no more do: 2 Cor. vi. 2, "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." And in this respect an hour's life may be worth a thousand worlds, because eternity may depend on it, and heaven be secured.

2dly, To act for the honour of God in the world, John ix. 4, forecited, which the dead have no more access to. To a good man an opportunity of doing good is valuable, as to an ill man to do mischief. What folk love, they will value access to serve; so the sinner values access to serve his lusts; and the saint to serve his Lord, and his neighbour. So, on this consideration,

(1.) Life is carefully and honourably to be preserved, as a valuable thing; and not to be thrown away, by neglect of the means of its preservation, or exposing it wilfully to means of destruction; Exod. xx. 13, "Thou shalt not kill."

(2.) The access to honour God in life, is to be laid in balance with the troubles of life, that the former may downweigh the latter, by that overweight that God's honour bears to our case; Phil. i. 20,

"According to my earnest expectation, and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death."

(3.) It is nicely to be improven to its proper ends, as a precious none-such, passing opportunity; every filing of it is to be gathered up as gold sparkling. Hence Paul exhorts to "redeem the time, because the days are evil," Eph. v. 16.

Use 2. Of Reproof to several sorts of persons.

1. To those who look on the business of praising and honouring God in the world as a burden. In itself it is the mercy of life; but they treat it as the plague of life. They are as Doeg, detained before the Lord; and any holy exercise is a weariness to them; as was the case with Israel; Amos viii. 5, "When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn? and the sabbath, that we may set forth wheat?" The Lord takes notice of this temper of spirit, Mal. i. 13, "Ye said also, Behold, what a weariness is it, and ye have snuffed at it, saith the Lord of hosts." O how would ye take with heaven? but be sure that ye will never get there in that case, as not being "made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light," Col. i. 12. Ye will be eased of that burden, but for a heavier one, Rev. xvi. ult.

2. To those who look on it as none of their business, whoever else be concerned in it. They make no profession of living to the honour of God, and their practice is conform. This speaks you neither to look on God as your Master, nor yet as your Father, Mal. i. 6. And if so, doubtless ye cannot look for his reward; nor for the eternal inheritance of his children; where then will lie the gain of this liberty, which you take to yourselves?

3. To those who spend their life without consideration of the chief business of life. They "spend their years as a tale that is told," Psal. xc. 9. O how many are dreaming away a lifetime, out of which they are not like to awake till death awake them! They can consider any thing but their soul's state; but the thought of that they cannot dwell on. They that cannot consider the great business of life, will certainly lose the opportunity of that business, and it will sit to them in the end: Prov. xx. 4. "The sluggard will not plough by reason of the cold; therefore shall he beg in harvest, and have nothing.

4. To those who delay the business of honouring God, till they shall be near death. Many such off-putters are there, who can never find the time to begin their work, though they do not want thoughts of it; as was the case with Felix, Acts xxiv. 25. who said

to Paul, "Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee." When they are young, they put off till they be old; then, till they be going to die; when sickness takes them, they put off still in hopes of recovery; when they are past hopes, they are not capable for it; and so the soul is lost. Meanwhile, all they are concerned for at best, is but their own safety, not God's honour; and being regardless of this latter, no wonder they fall short of the former.

5. *Lastly*, To those whose life is a life of dishonouring God, by secret and open wickedness and untenderness. And this seems to be the general case of this generation, by which we appear to be a "generation of God's wrath:" Micah vii. 2, 4. "The good man is perished out of the earth: and there is none upright among men: they all lie in wait for blood: they hunt every man his brother with a net. The best of them is as a brier: the most upright is sharper than a thorn-hedge: the day of thy watchmen, and thy visitation cometh; now shall be their perplexity." Corruption of life and manners is become universal, so that people are become shameless in their sin, and proof against conviction from the word, being so hardened under the softening means of grace, that the case is grown hopeless; all which cannot miss soon or late to bring down some rousing stroke, Jer. vi. 15. "Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore they shall fall among them that fall: at the time that I visit them, they shall be cast down, saith the Lord."

USE 3. Of exhortation. Make it the business of your life to live to the honour of God.

Quest. How shall we do that?

Ans. 1. Honour him by faith; Rom. iv. 20. "Abraham staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God. Faith gives God the honour of all his glorious perfections as manifested in the word; and without faith there is no acceptable honouring of him. Therefore the Christian life is a "life of faith," Gal. ii. 20. And honour him,

1*st*, By believing on his Son for salvation, receiving and resting on him as your Saviour, to save you from sin and wrath: 1 John iii. 23. "This is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ." If ye honour not God this way, ye honour him not at all, John v. 23. God has sent his Son in the character of Saviour of the world, 1 John iv. 14: put your case in his hand, that ye may be saved from your sin, and sanctified by him, and saved from wrath through him. If ye live in your sins,

and will not be healed; if ye do not believe him able and willing to save you, ye dishonour God egregriously in a most tender point; 1 John v. 10, 11. "He that believeth not God, hath made him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life: and this life is in his Son.

2*dly*, By trusting God in Christ in all times and cases: Isa. xxvi. 4. "Trust ye in the Lord for ever." The established way of communication with heaven, is by trust in God: and faith is productive of hope, which is the anchor of the soul, keeping the soul safe and spiritually at rest, in all storms public or private, Psalm xxxvii. 7. Trusting in the creature, is a putting it in God's place; and hence bearing such a weight, it bows under it, and fails. But God is honoured by trusting him.

3*dly*, By believing his word in all the parts of it. Hence is that exhortation of Jehosaphat's, 2 Chron. xx. 20. "Believe in the Lord your God, so shall you be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper." God is to be honoured by faith's acting on every part of the word; on the commands, believing the divine authority, equity, and goodness of them, as a transcript of the divine nature, Psal. cxix. 128; on the promises, believing the certain accomplishment of them, however unlikely, Rom. iv. 20, 21; on the threatenings, believing the justice and truth of them, Is. xxxix. ult. and lxvi. 2.

2. Honour him by the practice of holiness: 1 Pet. ii. 9. "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light. To lead a holy tender life is the way to honour God, conforming to him, and labouring to be like him in all conversation, 1 Pet. i. 15, 16. If ye be not uniform and universal in your obedience, that part ye are deficient in, may bring a blot on all the rest; as Judas' covetousness and treachery wiped out all his good deeds. And if ye would live to the honour of God, I would recommend to you particularly,

1*st*, Diligent and reverent worshipping of God: Matt. iv. 10—"Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. Psal. lxxxix. 7. "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints: and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him." Worship him in your families, morning and evening; worship him in secret by yourselves; worship him in the public assemblies; set up for his honour in the world; make conscience of joining therein for the honour of God. And be reverent in the frame of your heart, and in your outward gesture, as knowing that

he is a great God with whom ye have to do: and there can be no reverence in their hearts, who behave irreverently.

2*dly*, Be nice and exact in point of justice in your dealings; shaking your hands of all gain of unrighteousness, as in the sight of a holy just God: Isa. xxxiii. 15, 16. "He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly, he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil, he shall dwell on high," &c. That baseness of spirit, disposing to pick and steal, cheat, and catch any little advantage they can get of their neighbour without being discovered, that one can trust them no farther than they see, is most dishonouring to God, as if either he did not see, or else did approve of their wicked practices, Psal. l. 21, 22.

3*dly*, Be readily disposed to the duties of humanity, doing good to your neighbour, being kind, merciful, and compassionate to them that are in distress and need: Col. iii. 12. "Put on therefore, (as the elect of God, holy and beloved) bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering." This honours God in a very particular manner: Luke vi. 35, 36. "But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again: and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind to the unthankful, and to the evil. Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful." And it has much encouragement by promise: Prov. iii. 9, 10. "Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the first-fruits of all thine increase. So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine." Psal. xli. 1, 2, 3. "Blessed is he that considereth the poor; the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble. The Lord will preserve him, and keep him alive, and he shall be blessed upon the earth; and thou wilt not deliver him into the will of his enemies. The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness. A selfish, unkind, unsympathizing, narrow spirit, is a great stain on an otherwise fair character.

4*thly*, Be the same in secret when no eye sees you, that you would be in public. This will much honour God, when the conscience of his eye being on you, is as forcible to restrain you from evil, as the eyes of the world would be; as was the case with Joseph, Gen. xxxix. 9. when he said to his lewd mistress, "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" O what do the practisers of secret mischief think of God! They can do a mischief unseen, and then cover it with a lie. But alas! is there not a God

in heaven, that sees himself dishonoured by such practices? See Prov. xxvi. 26. Open shame, or else a secret stroke, will be the consequence, Job xx. 26.

5thly, Shew yourselves on God's side, in the midst of the dishonours done to him in the world. For ye must either join issue with the dishonourers of his name, or else testify against them: hence says our Saviour, Matt. xii. 30. "He that is not with me, is against me: and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad." If you have no heart nor brow to appear for God, while ye see him dishonoured, remember what God accounts of that, and how he will treat it: Mark viii. ult. "Whosoever shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels." Beware of being partakers with other men's sins; but set yourselves to be a check upon sin in others, and witnesses against it, else ye honour not God.

6thly, Commend the way of God and religion to others, and encourage good motions where ye can perceive them. Grace is communicative for the honour of God; and every gracious person is disposed to propagate religion. Hence said the Lord of Abraham, Gen. xviii. 19. "I know him, that he will command his children, and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment, &c. The wearing out of that so much now, from what it was in former years, is one of the black symptoms of the decay of religion at this day.

7thly, Learn to bear troubles in the world with a Christian patience, meekness, resignation, and holy cheerfulness. This doth exceedingly tend to the honour of God; as you see exemplified in the worthies mentioned Heb. xi. There is a despising of the chastening of the Lord, wherein the proud and foolish scorn to be lowered by the rebukes of Providence, wherein the atheism of the heart, and contempt of God appears. There is a fainting under the rebukes of Providence, wherein unbelief appears. Both are dishonourable to God, and to be guarded against, Heb. xii. 5. The middle course is to God's honour.

Lastly, Walk with God in a conscientious performance of the duties of your station. Hence is that exhortation of the Apostle's, 1 Cor. vii. 24. "Brethren, let every man wherein he is called, therein abide with God." That is the sphere wherein ye are set to honour God: and God is much honoured that way. It is exemplified in the case of the priests, Mal. ii. 6. in that of wives, 1 Pet. iii. 5. and in that of servants, Tit. ii. 10. No man can live to the honour of God, who does not carefully notice, and diligently pursue the duties of his station, to the honour of God.

I shall give you a few motives to live to the honour of God.

Mot. I. God is the author of thy life. The life and being thou hast, thou hast from God: Rom. xi. ult. "For of him, and through him, and to him are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen." Therefore "remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth," Eccl. xii. 1. And since he is your first cause, is it not reasonable that he be your chief end? The life which you all had from him, will ye not improve for him?

Mot. 2. God is the preserver of thy life. Hence says David, Psal. xxxvi. 6. "O Lord, thou preservest man and beast." For every moment's life thou hast had, thou art his debtor. Thy life is continually in his hand, to prolong it, or take it away, as seems good in his sight. If he should but withdraw his upholding hand, thy life would presently go. Every moment there must be a new outletting of influence from him for preservation of thy life. How unaccountable must it be then not to live to his honour? This was a grievous charge against Belshazzar, Dan. v. 23. "The God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified."

Mot. 3. God is the giver of all thou hast whereby thou mayst honour him. Hast thou a tongue whereby thou art capable to speak for God, and hands to act for him? he gave them to thee. Hast thou any health, strength, wealth, and reputation, whereby thou art in capacity to honour him? all is from him: and shall not his own be used for him? Hence saith David, 1 Chron. xxix. 14. "All things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee." Is it not sacrilegious to do otherwise?

Mot. 4. God puts opportunities in thine hand for honouring him. As he has given thee means whereby thou mayst honour him, so his providence lays to thy hand opportunities calling thee to use them, Luke xix. 13. Every opportunity is a providential call, to lay out what the Lord has put in thy hand for his service. And it will be found dangerous to hide one's talents in the earth, and not lay them out for God.

Mot. 5. There are some who are deprived of those abilities or occasions ye have to honour God. So the whole Pagan world is deprived of gospel-light, which we all have; the sick of those which the healthy have. The not improving of them then will aggravate your condemnation, Matth. xi. 21. It is sad to be cumberers of the ground in God's vineyard, taking up room in it uselessly, which others might improve to good advantage.

Mot. 6. Ye have forfeited by sin all your abilities, opportunities, and your very life. God might justly have taken them all from us,

and made us as incapable to speak or act for his honour, as we have been unwilling to it. But his patience has suffered us long, and he has done us good though unthankful and evil, if peradventure these might lead us to repentance. Shall not this engage us to live to his honour?

Mot. 7. This was the design of the redemption purchased by Christ, Tit. ii. 14. "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Man was made at first for the honour of God: sin entering rendered him unfit for that his great work. Therefore Christ died that they might be again brought to live to God's honour, Eph. v. 25, 26, 27. If then ye are not so living, it is an evidence Christ's redemption is not applied to you as yet: and if ye continue so, it will evidence that ye are none of the redeemed ones.

Mot. 8. It is the design of the sanctification of the Spirit. Hence says the Apostle, 1 Pet. ii. 9. "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." When God puts his Spirit into a man, it is that he may walk in his way, Ezek. xxxvi. 27. So that if ye live not to the honour of God, it is an evidence that ye have not the Spirit, but are dead while ye live.

Mot. 9. *Lastly*, It is a lost life that is not lived to the honour of God, lost in death, eternal death. Hence says our Lord, Matth. xvi. 25, 26. "Whosoever will save his life, shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake, shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Consider, this life is short, it is soon away; it is uncertain, none knows how soon: but such as it is, eternity depends on it; Eccl. ix. 10.—"For there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest." If ye live not to the honour of God here, never expect to live with him hereafter in heaven. Remember the end of the slothful servant, Matth. xxv. 30. "Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping, and gnashing of teeth." For your help to live to the honour of God, take these following directions.

1. Allow yourselves the justice once seriously to consider, now that ye are living, and must die, what will be the best way for you to spend that bit of life. It is pity that people should not propose to themselves a design of living, and consider what is that design of life that will come to the best account at length. Surely if ye do, ye will find no design so reasonable and advantageous as this.

2. Then take him for your God in Christ, that ye may live to his honour; and do not think that it is by your living to his honour, that he must become your God. Faith must go before obedience, if ever the obedience be kindly. Faith first embracing salvation in the free offer of the gospel, natively engages the heart to honour God, as a son doth his father.

3. Labour to keep up the love of God in the heart, by believing his love; and that will be a strong band. Hence says the Apostle, 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. "The love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again."

Lastly, Firmly believe that there is a reward of grace for the righteous; and that not a good word or good work, spoke or done for God, shall want a reward. Hence is that exhortation of the Apostle's, 1 Cor. xv. *ult.* "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

Doct. II. It is the special business and privilege of life, to propagate religion, God's name and praise; the standing generation to the rising generation, the fathers to the children, all along.

In discoursing this doctrine, I shall shew,

I. What it is to propagate religion, God's name and praise, to the rising generation.

II. Who are the standing and rising generation, the fathers and the children, among whom this propagation of religion is to pass.

III. In what respects it is the special business of life.

IV. In what respect it is the special privilege of life.

V. *Lastly*, Apply,

I. I shall shew what it is to propagate religion, God's name and praise, to the rising generation. It implies these four things.

1. The having of religion ourselves. None can propagate what they have not. If men have not the knowledge and love of God themselves, how can they praise him to others? Men are sensible, that if they gain not a competent portion of the world to themselves, they can leave none to their children: so if they be idle or wasters, they are unjust to their families, 1 Tim. v. 8. Even so if ye are not religious, ye not only dishonour God, and destroy your own souls, but ye are unjust to the rising generations, and destructive to their souls too.

2. The profession of religion. Hence says the Apostle, Rom. x. 10. "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Men have may a profes-

sion without the practise of religion; but the practise requires the profession of it. And no man will ever propagate religion that is not himself a professor of it. And the profession must be such as is not visibly contradicted by the practise: for if example destroy what precept builds up, there is no propagating religion to others by that means. So a credible profession of religion is a debt owing to the rising generation.

3. A desire to continue and spread religion in the world. Without this none will propagate it; for what men have no desire of the continuance or spreading of, they will be lothe to propagate. And it is the want of concern for the continuance and spreading of religion, that makes men so careless about the propagating thereof. They have no due concern for their own souls; therefore they have none either for God's honour, or the good of those that come after them.

4. *Lastly*, Contributing our endeavours to bring others, and particularly the rising generation, to the knowledge and practice of religion. Hence, says the Psalmist, Psalm lxxviii. 2—4, "I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old: which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the Lord; and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done." Man is born like a wild ass's colt, wanting both knowledge and experience. We see such as come into our world, come in naked among us; and we judge ourselves obliged to clothe them, feed them, and teach them how to do for themselves. But withal they have and can do as little for their souls as for their bodies; and shall we leave them destitute in that point? How will we answer that to God? Now, to contribute endeavours to bring them to religion, lies in endeavouring,

1*st*, To bring them to faith in Jesus Christ, which is the foundation of all religion: Psalm lxxviii. 7, "That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God; but keep his commandments." They come into the world lost sons and daughters of Adam, under God's wrath and curse. There is a Saviour provided; but they know it not, till the standing generation tell them of it. They are averse naturally to come to that Saviour, and are not aware of the danger of slighting him: it is justice and charity then to deal with them, in order to convince and bring them in.

2*dly*, To bring them to holiness of life; as did Abraham, Gen. xviii. 19, "I know him, (says the Lord), that he will command his children, and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment." When they come into

our world, they bring a corrupt nature with them, which begins early to sprout. Satan will begin his temptations with them as soon as they are capable, losing no time. The longer sin continues in them uncurbed, the stronger does it grow. It nearly concerns the standing generation then to contribute their endeavours to quench the hellish flame, and to turn the stream and course of their life from sin to holiness. And this,

(1.) By precept and counsel, Gen. xviii. 19, forecited. Thus we are to praise God to them, by word of mouth. We should shew them what we have to say in God's behalf, commend religion to them, disparage the way of sin and of the world to them; bind duty on their conscience, by shewing them the tie of the word, and oblige them thereto by any authority we have over them.

(2.) By example. Let us write out religion in our own walk before them, that they may be brought to copy after us. Those precepts that are illuminated with example, are most ready to take. Beware of casting an ill example before their eyes; for the corruption of nature lies that way; and he that sins before a child, sins twice; for his sin lies fair to be repeated by the young spectator.

(3.) By dependence on the Lord for a blessing on the means used for their good. Hence says the apostle, 2 Cor. x. 4. "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds." Whoever he be that plants, if God give not the increase there will be none, 1 Cor. iii. 6. That is a great truth in all cases, in spiritual as well as worldly things, 1 Sam. ii. 9. "By strength shall no man prevail." If a man should use the best arguments, the strongest motives, the most feasible measures, for bringing others into the way of religion; and upon the suitableness of the means promise himself success, he takes the way most likely to render them ineffectual. The word spoken needs to be mixed with faith in the speaker. And he is most likely to succeed that uses the means of God's appointment for doing good, with entire dependence on the Lord for success.

(4.) *Lastly*, By prayer for them. Thus it is promised concerning Christ, Psal. lxxii. 15. that "prayer shall be made for him continually," viz. that his kingdom may come, by the daily coming in of new subjects to him. Since the success of all that we can do for the good of the rising generation depends on the Lord's blessing, it is necessary that we plead for them at the throne of grace, quickening ourselves thereto, by consideration of the honour of God, and their eternal welfare, that depend on it.

The second general head was to shew, Who are the standing and rising generation, the fathers and the children, among whom this

propagation of religion is to pass. And this must be stated according to the language of the Holy Ghost, and the analogy of other parts of Scripture, if we would rightly see whose is this duty. In general I shall premise,

1. All superiors and inferiors are, in Scripture-style, comprehended under fathers and children. This is plain from the fifth commandment, which, under the name of father and mother, whose relatives children are, prescribes the mutual duties of superiors and inferiors. Therefore every one is to propagate religion to his inferiors.

2. Forasmuch as there is no perfect and absolute equality among men, but some who are inferior in one respect to others, may be superior to them in another respect; it is the duty of equals and inferiors to propagate religion among themselves, and to their superiors, mutually communicating their light and warmth.

3. Some may belong to the standing generation in one respect, who belong to the rising one in another; as a person who is inferior to some, and superior to others. So they are to have it propagated to them, and they are to propagate it to others again.

4. *Lastly*, The same command of God that binds the standing generation and fathers to propagate religion, binds the rising generation and children to receive it. God, by binding parents to instruct, binds the children to receive instruction. And they that are the rising generation now will be the standing in a little. But more particularly,

1. Fathers of the state; magistrates, supreme or subordinate, are to propagate religion to their political children, their subjects. They are God's vicegerents on earth, clothed with dominion and authority over others, to be employed for God in whose name they act. Hence is that promise, Is. xlix. 23. "Kings shall be thy nursing-fathers, and their queens thy nursing-mothers." And it is one of the blackest symptoms of the corruption of the world, that oft-times they are found set to extirpate religion.

2. Fathers in the church, ministers, and other ruling church-officers, to their ecclesiastical children, the people whom they are set over, 2 Kings. ii. 12. It is for this very end they are put in office. Hence, says the Apostle, Heb. xiii. 17. "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account: that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you." Jesus Christ brought this religion from heaven, employed his apostles to propagate it; to them they succeed in the office of propagat-

ing religion; and must see to make it their business, as they will be answerable.

3. Fathers of families to their children. For every family ought to be a church, wherein holy worship, doctrine, discipline, and government ought to be maintained, by the heads thereof. And particularly,

1*st*, Fathers and mothers to the children procreated of their bodies. This is the chief thing in the text, "The father to the children shall make known thy truth. Compared with Gen. xviii. 19. "I know him, that he will command his children, and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment." It is but an inferior part of your charge to provide meat and clothes for your children, and to put them in a way of living; the chief part is to see to their souls, that they may be recovered out of the lost state they are in by nature. It will be but a sorry kindness, to be concerned for their provision in time, if ye neglect them as to their eternal concerns. It is by them your name is to be propagated, and you are to propagate God's name to them, in point of gratitude to God, justice and natural affection to them.

2*dly*, They are to do it also to all others in their family, whether they be servants, or whatever they be, if they be members of the family for shorter or longer time. Being in your family, ye are instead of fathers and mothers to them, and owe them that benefit. Hence masters are called fathers, 2 Kings v. 13; and the duty of propagating religion is expressly extended to one's household, Gen. xviii. 19, forecited. And whosoever have the chief authority in a family, though they be servants themselves, are the fathers of it in this sense.

4. Fathers in gifts or grace, to those who are children in these respects in comparison of them, 1 John ii. 12, 13. So Joseph was a father to Pharaoh, Gen. xlv. 8. If God has bestowed on you more gifts or grace than on others, mind ye are thereby made fathers to those that are weaker than you, and are obliged to communicate your light to them, 1 Cor. xii. 7. So teachers are called fathers, Gen. iv 20; and the Spirit of God the common Father, 1 Sam. x. 12. It will then make a dreadful reckoning, for men to have gifts, and not lay them out for the benefit of others; to use their gifts just for ostentation, and instead of helping, to brangle, and confound, and perplex the weaker with them.

5. Fathers in years, to those who are children in respect of age to them, 1 Tim. v. 1, 2. It is Elihu's observe, Job. xxxii. 7. that "days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom." The more days the more experience, the more access to improve in

knowledge; and so to be the more useful to the younger. Mind, then, that your superiority in years constitutes you fathers to those younger than you. Ye will not forget it in point of the regard ye expect from them, and God allows you it, 1 Pet. v. 5; but then ye should make conscience of the duty too, propagating religion to them.

Thus ye see the standing and rising generation. And if these fathers would set themselves to the propagating of religion to their respective children, the work would go on.

III. The third general head was to shew, In what respects it is the special business of life. The business of life appointed by the great Master is manifold; but the sum of it is to honour God, Rom. xi. ult; and the chief branch thereof, the special business of life, is to propagate religion, the standing to the rising generation. This will appear in the following particulars.

1. It is the business of life, that would have been the business of it though sin had never entered into the world. The business of the lawyer, and physician, and many handicrafts now in the world, owe their original and necessity to sin's entrance. Nay, the very business of our own salvation does so too; for if Adam had stood the time of trial, all his posterity's eternal happiness would have been thereby secured to their hand. But God having settled the manner of the propagation of mankind, as Gen. i. 28. it was an evidence that the succeeding generations were not to be created in their prime as Adam was; but to be born infants, and grow up by degrees, in knowledge of religion and other things, as appears from Luke ii. ult. And this would have afforded this business.

2. It is the business of life, that most singly looks to the honour of God. God is honoured by our working out our own salvation; but then our own advantage bears great stroke in it allowably, as well as his honour; but this is a business carried on not for ourselves, but for God allenarly; and in that respect is the more noble. Hence we find the Apostle willing, for the great end of the propagation of religion, either to live or die, to put off his own eternal happiness for a time, Phil. i. 26, downwards. And he prefers one's edifying the church, to his own comfort, 1 Cor. xiv. 4, 5. He edifies the church that edifies his house, Neh. iii. 28, 30.

3. It is the business of life, that is the end of life and salvation given to the elect, and all their comforts and enjoyments. Hence said our Lord to Peter, Luke xxii. 32. "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." We get life and salvation by believing in Christ; and are as really possessed of eternal life that we can never lose, upon

our first believing, as the saints in heaven are, though not in that measure, 1 John v. 11, 12. When the Lord had a mind to honour Paul to propagate religion, he reached his own heart first by his grace; and then, having so furnished him, he set him to work. Is not that the special business of life for which God brings people into a state of salvation?

4. It is the business of life that the new creature as natively falls to as the new-born infant falls a-breathing. Hence it is said, Psal. xxii. 30, 31. "A seed shall serve him, it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation. They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done this." So the woman of Samaria, John iv. 29. "Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?" Paul, as soon he was converted, fell a-propagating the religion that before he persecuted. Grace makes people communicative; and there is never a soul in which the leaven of grace is received, but would, if it could, leaven the whole world with the same.

5. It is the business of life that is most useful to mankind. And we should remember, that both conscience and interest require us to live so as to be useful to our fellow-creatures; Rom. xiv. 7. "For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself." Some have been great blessings to mankind by their usefulness, in propagating arts and sciences, in relieving the oppressed, and helping the needy; but none so useful as those who have propagated religion among them; as extending not only to their good in this, but the other world, Is. xix. 24, 25. And a disposition to be useful to mankind would prompt men to this duty.

6. It is the business of life of the most diffusive usefulness. It brings honour to God, comfort to one's self, and advantage to others; it brings advantage to their souls, tends to make them holy here, and happy hereafter. It reaches not only to the present generation, but to the generations yet unborn; in so far as, you propagating religion to your children, they will propagate it again to theirs, and theirs to theirs, and so on. It is to be lamented, that some children follow not the steps of their religious parents. But everybody may observe, that there are some families wherein one generation after another appears for God; others, wherein, generation after generation, religion can never get place among them. Trace these back, and ye may come to one that was careful to propagate religion to his children, and his children propagated it again to theirs, and so on; and to another that had no care that way about his children, and his children had as little again about theirs, and so on.

7. *Lastly*, It is the business of life that is the most valuable, most worthy of the dignity of an immortal soul, and likest the life that Christ led in the world. The business of most men is nothing but laborious trifling; their thoughts, cares, and time, are wholly spent on things pertaining to this life, as if they had souls of no other constitution than their bodies. It is nothing like the life of Christ, who went about doing good, propagating religion: 1 Pet. ii. 21. "Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps." Compared with 1 John ii. 6. "He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked."

IV. The fourth thing proposed was, to shew In what respect it is the special privilege of life.

1. It is that whereby we may honour God most, and so answer the end of our creation most. In our own embracing religion, we receive the light, in propagating it we diffuse the light received to the greater glory of God: 1 Pet. ii. 9. "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." Hence among those who turn from sin unto righteousnes, those who turn most of others to it will have the greatest glory: Dan. xii. 3. "They that be wise, shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever."

2. It is that whereby we may be most useful in the world to others. No benefit done to our fellow-creatures is comparable to it. We have indeed access to do for their temporal advantage, but this is for their eternal. And when the opportunity of life is over, there is no more doing that way, Luke xvi. 27, downwards.

Use. I. Of reproof to several sorts of persons. And,

1. To those who make no conscience of propagating religion to their families, among their children and servants. Every man is, by divine appointment, the prophet of his own family to teach them, the priest to worship God with them, and the king to rule them. Each will maintain his own authority to his power; but family worship, with many, is not so closely stuck to, but family teaching least of all, which is yet commanded of God: Deut. vi. 6, 7. "These words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart. And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and thou shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down and when thou risest up." The want of this makes ministerial teaching in preaching and examination so unsuccessful. How will men answer this neglect of the special business of life?

2. To those who are backward and averse to receive family instruction, or submit to family discipline, checks and reproofs for their miscarriages. They will get away from family catechising on Sabbath nights, shift family exercise, and cannot endure to be checked for their miscarriages; and therefore they like best to be in those families where least of these is to be found. But if it is the duty of others to propagate religion to you, it is on the peril of your souls ye refuse to receive it. It will aggravate your condemnation, John iii. 10.

3. To those who set an ill example before those that are younger than they. Much of the corruption of children, is owing to the ill examples set them by parents, servants, and others whom they are near. This lets them see much ill which they would otherwise be ignorant of; and the bias of their nature lying that way, they are, by that means, carried down the stream. So a woe is is brought on themselves, and them that set them the copy: Matt. xviii. 7. "Woe unto the world because of offences: for it must needs be that offences come: but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh. Oh that men would consider, that they do in effect teach that which they do or say before the younger sort; for childhood is the imitating age.

4. To those who do not check the outbreaking of corrupt nature in those of the younger sort, especially parents in their children. O the cruelty of some parents, who, by their ceasing to nip sin in the bud in their children, betray them into such habits of sin as afterwards it is too late to correct. They will neglect prayer, profane the Sabbath, swear, lie, and meet with no check; they will steal little things, and the parents will make them welcome. And thus, by their parent's means, some are so accustomed to sin, that, as they grow, it grows, till it brings some to an ill end. Remember the children of Bethel, 2 Kings ii. 23, 24.

5. To those who propagate irreligion to the rising generation; who teach a young generation to despise serious godliness, to contemn the ordinances of God, and to lead loose and licentious lives, impatient of restraint. Do they not propagate irreligion who keep up their minced oaths, "haith," "faith," &c. which would die out of our language, were it not that they were propagated from father to son, from the old to the young; who keep up the observation of superstitious times and customs, Yule, Fastens-even, &c. the relics of Popery and Paganism, which might be razed out of memory, were it not that they are carefully propagated from one generation to another?

6. To those that go about to debauch a young generation, by

instilling into them loose and licentious principles, which youth is ready to fall in with; by taking a liberty with them in obscene filthy speaking, making youthful lusts the subject of their mirth and sport; leading them in to drunkenness, an inlet to all other vices; tempting them to the commission of the sin of uncleanness with them, which will be bitterness in the end to the seducer and the seduced; encouraging them to acts of dishonesty, cheating and stealing from their parents or masters. These are factors for hell, who do what in them lies to destroy souls Christ died for.

7. To those that are ready to hide and cloak the scandalous sins of others, working that they may not be brought to light. How many poor souls of the younger sort, whom Satan has got led aside into the ways of sin, might have been recovered out of the snare of the devil, if it had not been the cruel kindness of some, who bestirred themselves to cover their sins? But thereby they have been hardened in their sin, and have gone from evil to worse, till at length they have been ruined for altogether. See what an awful threatening there is pronounced against such, Lev. v. 1, "If a soul sin, and hear the voice of swearing, and is a witness, whether he hath seen or known of it; if he do not utter it, then he shall bear his iniquity."

8. *Lastly*, To those who cannot see themselves under any obligation to propagate religion, and concern themselves as little about it. They think that may be the business of ministers, and possibly of fathers to their own children; but not theirs. As soon as the Spirit of God touches your hearts in earnest about your own salvation ye will change your mind; ye will find a natural concern for the advancing of the kingdom of Christ: John iv. 29. "Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?" The love of God, and of your neighbour, planted in the heart, will create a concern this way: and not daring to be against him, and scatter, ye will be for Christ, and gather with him. The leaven will seek.

USE 2. Of Exhortation. Make it the special business of your lives to propagate religion to the rising generation.

Motive 1. There is the strongest obligations on you for it. Ye are in that point under the title of,

1*st*. Divine authority. God commands you to do it, requires it of you. It is commanded to all "edify one another," 1 Thess. v. 11; yea, all things must be done for that end, 1 Cor. xiv. 26. And the reason is plain, that God has placed men in society, and in Christian society, for that end, Rom. xiv. 7. And the elder sort are made tutors and teachers to the younger for that end, Deut. iv. 10, and xi. 19.

2*dly*, Gratitude to God. Is not God your Creator, Preserver, and Sustainer? And what can ye do for him, for all the goodness bestowed on you, if ye do not propagate his name and praise, and strive to stir up the love and fear of him in the rising generation? If ye have any share in the redemption of Christ, ye cannot but find yourselves under the strongest ties of gratitude for redeeming love, to labour that his name may be transmitted from generation to generation. Hence says the Psalmist, Psal. lxxii. 17. "His name shall endure for ever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in him; all nations shall call him blessed."

3*dly*, Justice to former generations, who have propagated religion to us. What case had we been in this day if it had not been for the sufferings of confessors, and the blood of martyrs, which they underwent, that religion might be transmitted to us, and by us, to succeeding generations? Had they given up with it, it had been lost as to us. Now, they have an interest in succeeding generations; and if we propagate it not to them, we betray our trust, and are unjust to them, and denude the succeeding generation of the inheritance of their fathers. We should, like those of Psal. lxxviii. 3, 4. "Utter the things which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us; not hiding them from our children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done."

4*thly*, Our own interest. That maxim, Prov. xi. 24. "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty, holds in this, as much as in anything. Religion is a fire, which, being smothered, goes out; but getting a vent, increaseth. It is like the widow's oil, that increased in the pouring out; and like the bread that increased in the breaking. Were men more set on propagating religion to others, they would have more to themselves.

5*thly*, Charity to the rising generation. Their eternal state, as to well or woe, depends on their embracing or continuing strangers to religion. They need your help; for the bias of their nature lies the wrong way; the devil and an evil world cease not to ply them to walk according to that bias; and if their spiritual enemies gain their point, they are ruined.

Mot. 2. This is the chief part of your generation-work. The work of our own salvation must be seen to, Philip. ii. 12; but that is not all we have to do. We are to do that for ourselves; but, then, for the honour of God, and the good of our fellow-creatures, we are to ply our generation-work, Acts xiii. 36; and that mainly

lies here: Psal. cxlv. 4. "One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts." Ye are all doing; but what are ye doing for the honour of God, for the service of your generation? Ye have a room in this generation; and God who set you in it, will call you to account how ye fill it up.

Mot. 3. As ye carry yourselves in this matter, your sin or your good works will be going on, after ye are dead and gone, in this world. The last judgment we must undergo is not without reason delayed to the end of the world; for the sins of wicked men, and the good works of the godly, will then be hugely increased beyond what they are at their death. Good Abel is useful to this day; Heb. xi. 4. "He being dead, yet speaketh." Haman in his life set a mischief a-going, which continued after he was gone, Esth. viii. 3; and the sin of Jeroboam, the first king of Israel, continued till that kingdom was at an end, 2 Kings xvii. 22, 23. If ye propagate religion to the rising generation, that good work will survive you; and if ye neglect it, your criminal omission may live and destroy souls long after ye are gone, which will be laid to your charge at the great day.

Mot. 4. It is a noble and beneficial work. Hence says the Apostle James, chap. v. 19, 20. "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins." To save a soul from perishing is such noble work that it is an honourable working to be aiming at it, and using means to compass it.

Mot. 5. *Lastly*, The doom of unprofitable servants is dreadful; Matth. xxv. 30. "Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." No man can profit God, but every man may and ought to profit others, Job xxxv. 7, 8, laying out their talents for the good of others; and, if they do it not, they will be cast into outer darkness, as those who would not work when they had the light.

Object. But they are froward, and will not receive instruction, nor take advice. *Ans.* That is a part of their natural disease, Job xi. 12. Men take pains to break young beasts, till they make them tractable: and shall they not be at pains with those of their own kind? The waters wear the stones; and what has often slipped off, may at length come to stick. And a word spoken to them for their good, may lie long under the clod, but spring up at length. But our success is not the rule of our duty; we must do our part.

But more particularly, let heads of families be exhorted to propagate religion to their children and families.

Mot. 1. Consider ye have a charge of their souls, from God who has committed them to you. Hence the fourth commandment, the bond of all religion, is directed to heads of families. And in Abraham's example their duty is laid before them, Gen. xviii. 19. "I know him," says the Lord, "that he will command his children, and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment."

Mot. 2. They are born like wild asses' colts, and have a natural bent to the way of sin and destruction; Psal. lviii. 3. "The wicked are estranged from the womb, they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies." It is too fond and blind a love to your children, that makes you take no notice of the corruption of their nature. And if they are naturally corrupt, what can ye expect but that they will run to their own ruin, if ye are not at pains with them for their souls' good? Hence says Solomon, Prov. xxix. 15. "The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself, bringeth his mother to shame."

Mot. 3. Parents propagate that corruption of nature to them, by natural generation. The sinful nature of children is a glass wherein the parents may get a humbling view of their own: Gen. v. 3. "Adam begat a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth." Compared with Job xiv. 4. "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one." Have ye been instrumental in conveying the poison to them, and will ye not be thereby stirred up to minister the antidote to them?

Mot. 4. They are in the midst of many snares, entered into a world wherein offences abound, Matt. xviii. 7. Their youth makes them raw and unexperienced, and disposes them to be rash and heedless. They have need of a monitor, and instructor, and guide. How shall they learn, if they are not taught?

Mot. 5. Ye must die; and it is like will die before them, and leave them in this evil world. Will ye not be concerned for them, that it may be well with them when ye are away? Your concern for their temporal provision will not make it well with them, while ye are not concerned to sow the seeds of religion in their hearts. That will be but to give much sail to an empty ship without ballast, that may sink her in the deep sea, as is seen in the sad experience of many.

Mot. 6. They must die; and it may be they may die before you, and leave you; and then they will have no use for all the temporal provision ye have laboured for, for them. But religion propagated by you to them, will then appear a precious treasure. But if ye have neglected that duty to them, that will then appear a criminal

neglect which ye will never more be capable to mend; and it will leave a galling sting in your conscience, if ye be not quite stupid.

Mot. 7. *Lastly*, What comfort can ye have in their case, while ye can have no comfortable prospect of their eternal happiness? If they were to be lords and ladies in this world, but to perish eternally in another world, what comfort can be there? The barren womb and dry breasts are preferable to the bringing forth children to the murderers; much more to the bringing forth children for hell-fire.

Let these things work upon your consciences, and on your natural affection, to bestir yourselves towards the propagating of religion to the rising generation. If ye have any conscience of duty towards God, any humanity towards your fellow-creatures, neglect it no more. For particular directions, I propose,

Doct. III. ult. The true way of propagating religion, the standing to the rising generation, is, that the former makes God known to the latter, so as they may betake themselves unto him, his truth and faithfulness, by faith and trust. This is the sense of the words of the text, and agreeable to the matter, Hezekiah's life being prolonged in virtue of that promise, 1 Kings viii. 25. "There shall not fail thee a man in my sight to sit on the throne of Israel; so that thy children take heed to their way, that they walk before me." So this notification is not of the matter as a speculation, but as a practical thing, that the rising generation may be brought to God.

In discoursing this doctrine, we shall consider,

I. The end to be aimed at in our teaching the rising generation.

II. The means to be used with them for that end.

III. Give the reasons why this is the true way of propagating religion, the standing to the rising generation.

IV. *Lastly*, Apply.

I. We shall consider the end to aimed at in our teaching the rising generation. And that is, that they may be brought to betake themselves unto the truth of God by faith and hope. This is expressly taught, Psal. lxxviii. 6, 7. "That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born: who should arise, and declare them to their children: that they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God; but keep his commandments." Now, here we are to consider,

1. What is this truth of God we are to endeavour to bring the rising generation to. 2. How one betakes himself unto God's truth, which is that we should aim to bring the rising generation to.

First, What is this truth of God we are to endeavour to bring the

rising generation to? The truth of God may be considered three ways.

1. In the divine doctrine in general. And thus whatever the Lord teaches in his word is true to a title. Hence says David, Psal. cxix. 160. "Thy word is true." All the discoveries made to us therein are to be relied on as most firm truth. But that truth of doctrine is not here meant; for it belongs to the means, the object to be made known.

2. In the divine threatenings. They are not mere scarecrows, as the wicked world looks on them, and disregards them, Deut. xxix. 19; but shall have a certain accomplishment in their true meaning and intention; for which cause believers of God's word tremble at them, Is. lxvi. 2. But neither is this here meant; since it is not the object of hope, but of fear.

3. In the divine promises. These are of two sorts. (1.) Law promises; as, "He that doth them, shall live in them." This cannot be here meant neither; for no man can be happy that way, Rom. viii. 3. (2.) The gospel-promises; such as, John iii. 16. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." Heb. viii. 10. "This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people." The belief of those is more difficult; but it is by them a soul can only be made happy, 2 Pet. i. 4. Therefore it is the truth or faithfulness of God in the promise of the gospel that is here meant, That is it we are to endeavour to bring the rising generation to.

Now, the promise of the gospel is held forth under the notion of God's truth, on these accounts.

1. In respect of the weight of the things promised therein. They are so great and weighty, that, were not the infallible truth of God impawned for them, they could not be believed by sensible guilty creatures; 2 Pet. i. 4, "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature." Compared with Luke xxiv. 25, 26, "Then Jesus said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?" That the eternal Son of God should take on man's nature, and suffer the most ignominious death therein, for sinners, who could have believed on another than God's own testimony? That God freely gives eternal life in him to sinners, as 1 John v. 11, who otherwise could believe?

2. The foundation of believing it is in God only. A true believer "receives the kingdom of God as a little child," Mark x. 15, on the mere testimony of his Father. There is nothing in nature's light to bring us to the belief of the gospel. So faith is called "the evidence of things not seen," Heb. xi. 1. The threatening of death in the law, a natural conscience prompts men to believe, Rom. i. ult. and ii. 15. But the promise of life in the gospel, depending allenary on revelation, the belief of it rests on the truth of God only; yea, nature rises up against it. The corrupt mind looks on it as foolishness; the corrupt will rejects it; the corrupt affections muster themselves up against it; and the natural conscience, the more it is awakened, the more hard it makes the belief of it. So the truth of God has all these to drive over and pull down. Hence, says the apostle, 2 Cor. x. 4, 5, "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."

3. In opposition to the falsehood, vanity, and lies of the world, which sinners naturally betake themselves to.

1*st*, The world swarms with lies, and has always since Satan hatched the first lie in it. The things of the world are lies, 1 John ii. 16; the men of the world are liars, Rom. iii. 4; yea, the best of them a lie, Psal. lxii. 9. There is no trusting of them, Jer. xvii. 5, 6.

2*dly*, The world itself is one great lie, Eccl. i. 2. Its appearances are unfair and deceitful; it appears to vain man quite another thing than it is; its shadows appear substantial, and so catch the unwary heart, Hos. xii. 1, 8. Yet it is "that which is not," Prov. xxiii. 5. It is not what it seems to be. Its promises are false, it never performs them; the good things of it are always greater in expectation than fruition; they disappoint, which is lying in scripture-style, Hab. iii. 17.

Secondly, How one betakes himself unto God's truth, which is that we should aim to bring the rising generation to. It lies in these five things.

1. In the conviction of the vanity of the world, and its deceitful lusts. Hence says David, Psal. cxix. 96, "I have seen an end of all perfection; but thy commandment is exceeding broad." The false and vain world offers itself as a satisfying portion to the rising generation, as soon as reason begins to dawn in them. To the infant it makes its court by the lust of the flesh in meat and drink; to the child by that, and the pride of life in clothing; and it is long

ere they know there is any thing better than these. To the youth it spreads out its all, "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life;" and whatever notions of religion they may have in their heads, till grace open their eyes, they will never truly see any thing to be better. Now, we should labour to convince them of the vanity of the world, that it will never satisfy, nor afford a rest to the heart; that its lusts are deceitful, and there is a ruining hook hid under that bait.

2. In renouncing of the world for a portion, and its lusts for our way, as being a broken reed, that will not only not bear our weight, but run through the hand that leans on it. Hence it is said, Jer. xvi. 19, "The Gentiles shall come unto the Lord from the ends of the earth, and shall say, Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and things wherein there is no profit." It is natural to man, and therefore to the rising generation, to stick by it, and not to give over the pursuit; but after a thousand disappointments still to hope for better from it, Is. lvii. 10. And the little experience youth has, makes them the more ready to do so. But we should endeavour to bring them to part with it, as a hopeless thing they will never mend themselves of, Psal. iv. 2.

3. In believing that there is an upmaking portion held forth in the promise of the gospel. This is the finding of the treasure hid in the field, Matth. xiii. 44. The carnal mind looks on the promise of the gospel but as idle tales; it is a treasure hid in a field, which men go over without noticing what is in it, because they see it not. But Christ is there, and in him the fulness of the Godhead, and with him all things enough to satisfy the boundless desires of a soul. And could we bring the rising generation really to believe this, we would do a great thing.

4. In trusting to the promise of the gospel allenary for life and happiness, and a rest to the heart, upon the ground of God's faithfulness. Here is the nature of faith, a betaking one's self unto God's truth, by trusting to him in his word of promise for all, Ruth ii. 12. It implies these three things. The soul seeing there is in the promise what is not in all the creation, enough to answer all its needs, and to make it completely happy,

1*st*, Believes its own common interest in the promise, that itself, as well as others, has access to claim it with all that is in it, and to rely on it as held out to him in particular to trust upon for his upmaking in time and eternity, Heb. iv. 1, 2. For no man can embrace the promise of the gospel, that does not first see himself warranted so to do. And the nature of the promise warrants all, John iii. 16, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only be-

gotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.

2*dly*, The man thereupon lays the weight of his happiness wholly on it, trusting that it shall be made out to him, and expecting all happiness from it. Thus he buys the field, takes possession of it, and the treasure hid therein, Matth. xiii. 44. This is the embracing of the promise, Heb. xi. 13. as one takes an honest man's word for his security, rests there, and looks no further. So what trust was before placed in a vain world, is now placed in the promise.

3*dly*, The ground on which he bottoms this his trust in the promise is not any thing in himself, but the truth and faithfulness of God, Tit. i. 2. The man sees the promise is not yea and nay, as the promises of fickle men are; but that it is the word of God which is surer than heaven and earth, Heb. xi. 11, and "yea in Christ," 2 Cor. i. 20. And to this trust we should labour to bring the rising generation, which is to bring them unto a rest for their restless hearts, by bringing them to Christ, and by him to God. When we see hungry infants moving about with their mouths for something to suck, natural affection teaches to set them on the breast; but as they grow up, ye might observe their hungry souls moving up and down among the creatures for a fill, and still restless because they cannot get it. It would be as great charity in that case, to endeavour to bring them to the breasts of divine consolations in the promise of the gospel.

5. *Lastly*, In hoping and waiting for their happiness from the promise of the gospel. Hence says the apostle, Rom. viii. 24, 25, "We are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." There is much got out of the promise, for the present, in hand; but still there is more in hope, to be got on the other side of death. The natural cry is, "Who will show us any good?" It is hard to make children wait even for temporal good things; they would aye have all presently, whenever they take it in their head: but it is harder to get them to wait in the matter of a portion for their hearts. So they greedily embrace the present world. But we should labour to get them off that, and wait for happiness in another world.

II. The means to be used with them for that end. That is, to make God known to them. He is to many of the aged among men an unknown God, as to any saving acquaintance with him: but to young ones, he is an unknown God, so much as by report or hearsay, till the aged do tell them of him. The saving knowledge of himself God only can give: but there is a doctrinal making of him known

to the rising generation: and that is our duty, Psal. xxii. ult. "They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done this."

Now, ye are to make him known to the rising generation as a God in Christ, John xiv. 9: for as such only he is the object of a guilty creature's trust for salvation, 2 Cor. v. 19. The blind world pretend to trust in God as an absolute God, not eyeing him as in Christ: but so he is "a consuming fire," Heb. xii. ult. And he is not honoured, but dishonoured by such a trust, John v. 23. In Christ he appears,

1. As a God of majesty and glory, 2 Cor. iv. 6. There is no glass in which ye can represent to the rising generation the glory and majesty of God so lively as in Christ. The creating a world of nothing, the deluge, destruction of Sodom, are but dim glasses, in comparison of the mystery of Christ. Here the glory of his infinite holiness, and infinite hatred of sin, his exact justice, his precise and unalterable truth, his unsearchable wisdom, most fully appear.

2. As the God of grace, 1 Pet. v. 10. The former view of God is apt to fill the soul with the honour, awe, and reverence of him, fit ballast for the vain heart: this view of God is apt to fill the soul with faith and love, whereby the heart may be disengaged from the vain world, and knit to him as the alone upmaking portion of the soul. In Christ ye can let them see majesty vailed with mercy, righteousness and peace kissing mutually, a crystal wall to go between them and the consuming fire.

III. The third thing is, To give the reasons why this is the true way of propagating religion, the standing to the rising generation.

1. Because all true religion begins with the knowledge of God in Christ. Hence our Lord says, John xvii. 3, "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." As long as ignorance of God continues in the soul, the prince of darkness rules there, the works of darkness go on there, and the party is on the way to everlasting darkness, Hos. iv. 6; Isa. xxvii. 11. Therefore cruel are they that bring up young ones, whether children or servants, in ignorance; especially considering, that it is the learning age, which season missed, the loss is seldom retrieved.

2. Because vain is that religion and knowledge that brings not the soul to betake itself to God's truth for a portion, and to renounce the world and its way, 1 Cor. viii. 1. Our aim in all our teaching should be to affect the heart, to bring sinners to God, to be his only, wholly, and for ever. To satisfy ourselves with filling their heads with notions of religion, while we are careless of getting their hearts to Christ, is sorry service.

3. Because the right discerning of the glory of God in Christ, is the true way to bring a sinner to faith in him: Psal. ix. 10. "They that know thy name will put their trust in thee." John. iv. 10. Jesus answered and said unto her, if thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, give me to drink; thou wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water." All who are brought acquainted with him, cannot choose but take up their soul's rest in him: and whoever do not betake themselves to him, it is because they know him not. For his glorious excellency truly discerned, cannot miss to captivate the heart.

Use. Make God known to the rising generation, so as they may be stirred up to give up with the vain and false world, and to betake themselves to the promise of the gospel, therein to take God for their portion. I have given motives already, I will now give directions how to manage the work.

1. A general direction. Aim at that particularly, and keep it always in your view, to teach them to know God in Christ. Never satisfy yourselves with letting them know, what God is in himself out of Christ; for that may strike them with terror, but it will never bring them to him in faith and love. But labour to discover to them the glory of God in the face of Jesus. Shew them Christ, and ye shew them the Father: for in him the fulness of the Godhead dwells. In his person, you may let them see God's willingness to take mankind into union and communion with himself; in his offices, how willing he is to teach them, justify them, and sanctify them; in his holy birth, what a nature is pleasing to him; in his righteous life, what a conversation he requires; in his satisfactory death, how dreadful his wrath is against sin; and in a word, how they may be made holy and happy for ever. Therefore inculcate on them the knowledge of Christ. I urge this for three reasons.

1*st*, Do this, and ye do all to them. Hence says the Apostle, 1 Cor. ii. 2. "I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." When the darkness of the night sits down on the face of the earth, as many candles as are burning abroad, so many spots of the earth, will be enlightened: but let the sun arise, and there will be light over all; for the one sun will do more than millions of lighted candles. So whenever Christ the Sun of righteousness ariseth, that gross darkness which covers the mind, will suddenly be dispelled. There is more of the glory of God to be seen in the face of Jesus, than throughout the whole compass of the heavens and the earth, which yet were made to declare the

glory of God. Life, eternal life, is in the knowledge of him, John xvii. 3.

2*dly*, Neglect this, and ye do nothing to them to purpose. Hence says Christ, "John viii. 24.—If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." That light that is without him is but darkness, and the sparks of knowledge and religion that is without illumination in the knowledge of Christ, will leave those that walk in the light of them, to lie down in sorrow at length, John i. 9. Not one truth is rightly learned as it centres in Jesus, Eph. iv. 20. 21.

3*dly*, Because the rising generation is in extreme hazard in this point at this time, beyond what they have been for many years. A religion is like to come in among them, that has no relation to Christ and his Spirit, which is in effect but refined Paganism. With some Christ is almost dropt out of their practical divinity, and morality in doctrine is justling out the gospel of the grace of God; and hence immorality in practice comes in like a flood. And principles are vented highly injurious to his glorious Godhead.

2. Particular directions are these.

1*st*, Acquant them with God's word. Let your children be learned to read; and your servants that cannot read, be so charitable as to teach them. And ye such servants secure that in your hiring of yourselves. And press them, and stir them up to read the scriptures ordinarily when they can do it. It is recorded of Timothy, to his honour, that "from a child he had known the holy scriptures, which are able to make men wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus," 2 Tim. iii. 15.

2*dly*, Neglect not family-catechising. Oblige them to get the Shorter Catechism, and labour to make them understand it by examining them. For which cause ye have many good helps laid to your hand.

3*dly*, Often inculcate on them their sinful and miserable state by nature, and the salvation for them in Jesus Christ.

4*thly*, Join a practical exhortation with your catechising. It might be profitable to close the catechising on every question of the Catechism upon a particular heed, with a short admonition to them by way of use. *Ex. gr.* on the first, Well, mind that the great thing ye have to do in the world, is to glorify God; and that the great thing ye have to seek, is the enjoyment of him.

5*thly*, Inculcate upon them, and train them up in a reverence and esteem of the ministry of the gospel, as an ordinance of Christ for the salvation of sinners. And oblige your family to a conscientious attendance; none of them to sit at home that are capable of profiting by the word, without a reason that will bear weight before God,

1 Cor. i. 21. I urge this the rather that some are trained up in a neglect, or in a contempt of it, to the ensnaring of their poor souls. Mind the poor children of Bethel.

6*thly*, Inculcate and labour to impress them with the belief of the vanity of the world, and the impossibility of finding a rest to their heart in any creature. Tell it them from the word, your own and their experience.

7*thly*, Inculcate and labour to impress them with the belief of the full happiness to be found in a God in Christ, held forth to them in the promise of the gospel. Solemnly assure them, that there they may find a rest to their heart; and that God is offering himself to them as such.

8*thly*, Make it known to them, how good a master God is; how pleasant the way of holiness is; what an ill master Satan is; how contrary and odious sin is to God; how dear it stood Christ; how bitter it will be to the sinner here or hereafter.

9*thly*, Put them on praying by any means, and teach them to pray, and inculcate on them the necessity of it.

10*thly*, Make known to them how God is a God of exact justice, and purest truth: and from thence, as ye love their souls, endeavour often to inculcate on them, and impress them with a horror of injustice in the least things, and of lying in any case. The sad way some are brought up in those points, leave them without any conscience of common honesty or truth.

And mind that "precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little and there a little," Is. xxviii. 10.

And be not discouraged though ye see not the fruit. The fruit may come when ye are in your grave. Mind Manasseh's conversion, when his godly father was dead and gone.

Now, ye young folk, and young ones, for whose cause so much has been said, I will leave this text, with three words to you, and a great offer.

1. Christ and the devil is striving about you. Christ is striving for you by his ministers, your parents, and masters, that show a concern for your soul, and by your own consciences. The devil is striving to hold you, by his temptations, a vain and wicked world, and your own lusts. But the devil is a murderer, the world is false and your lusts are deceitful, which ye will find if ye trust in them.

2 Ye are between the losing and the winning now. If Christ get you when ye are young, ye will serve him with life and spirit: if the devil prevail, the older ye grow, ye will go the farther from God. For youth goes with a great swing right or wrong.